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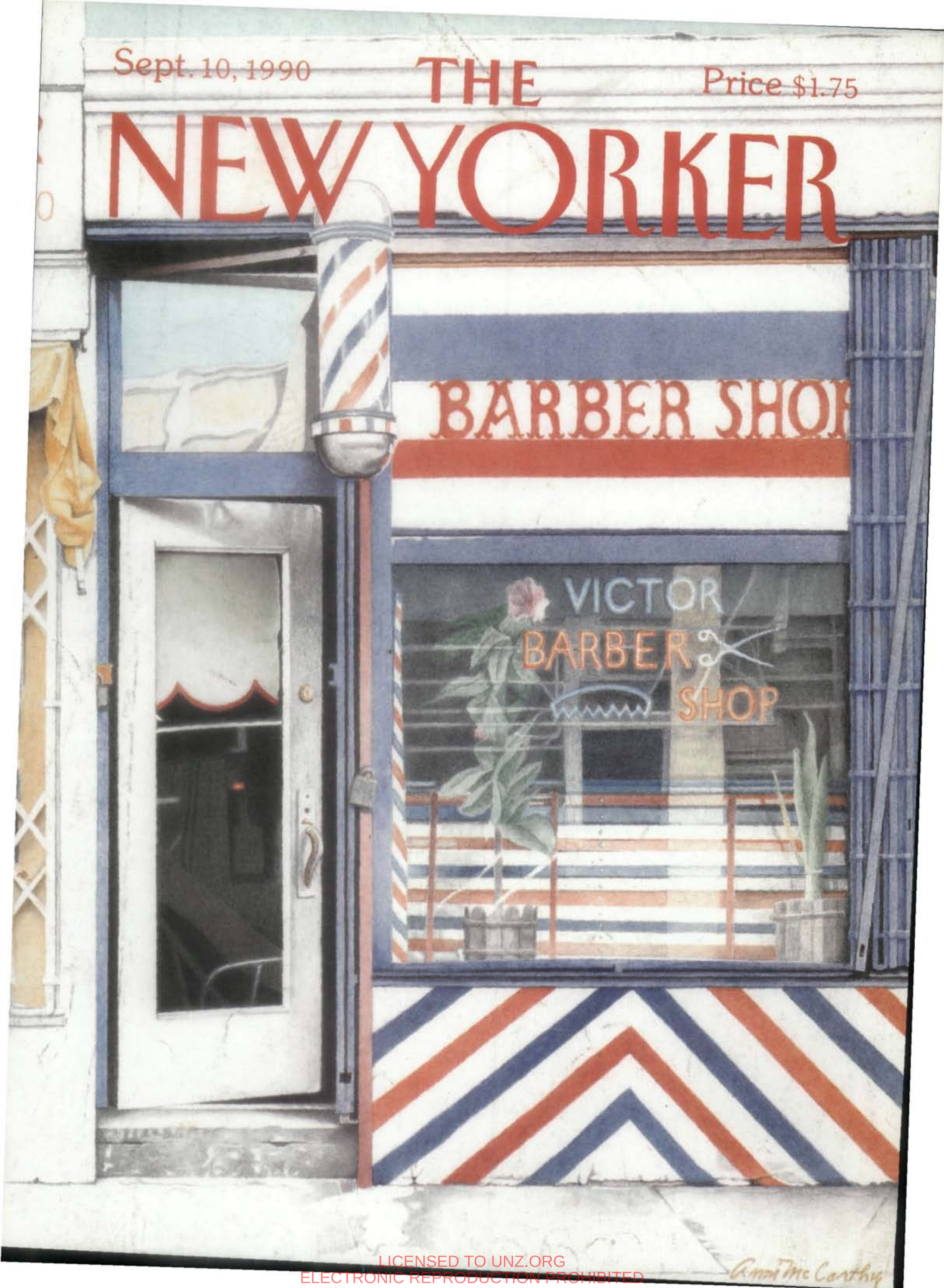
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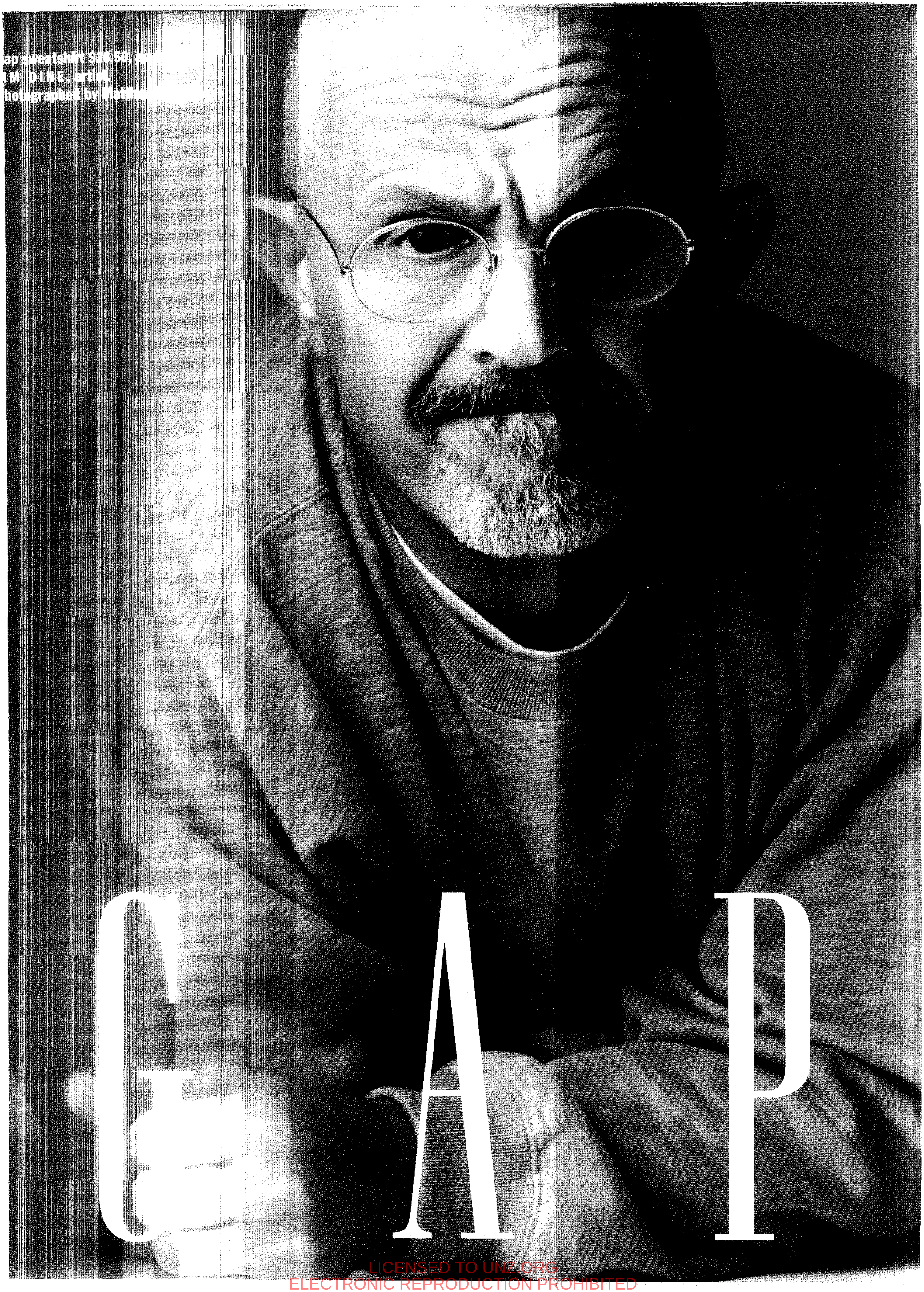
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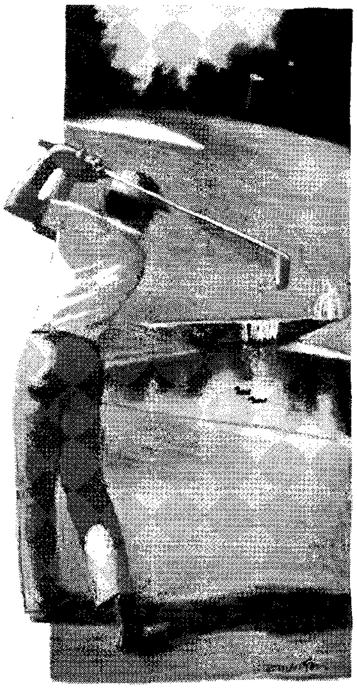

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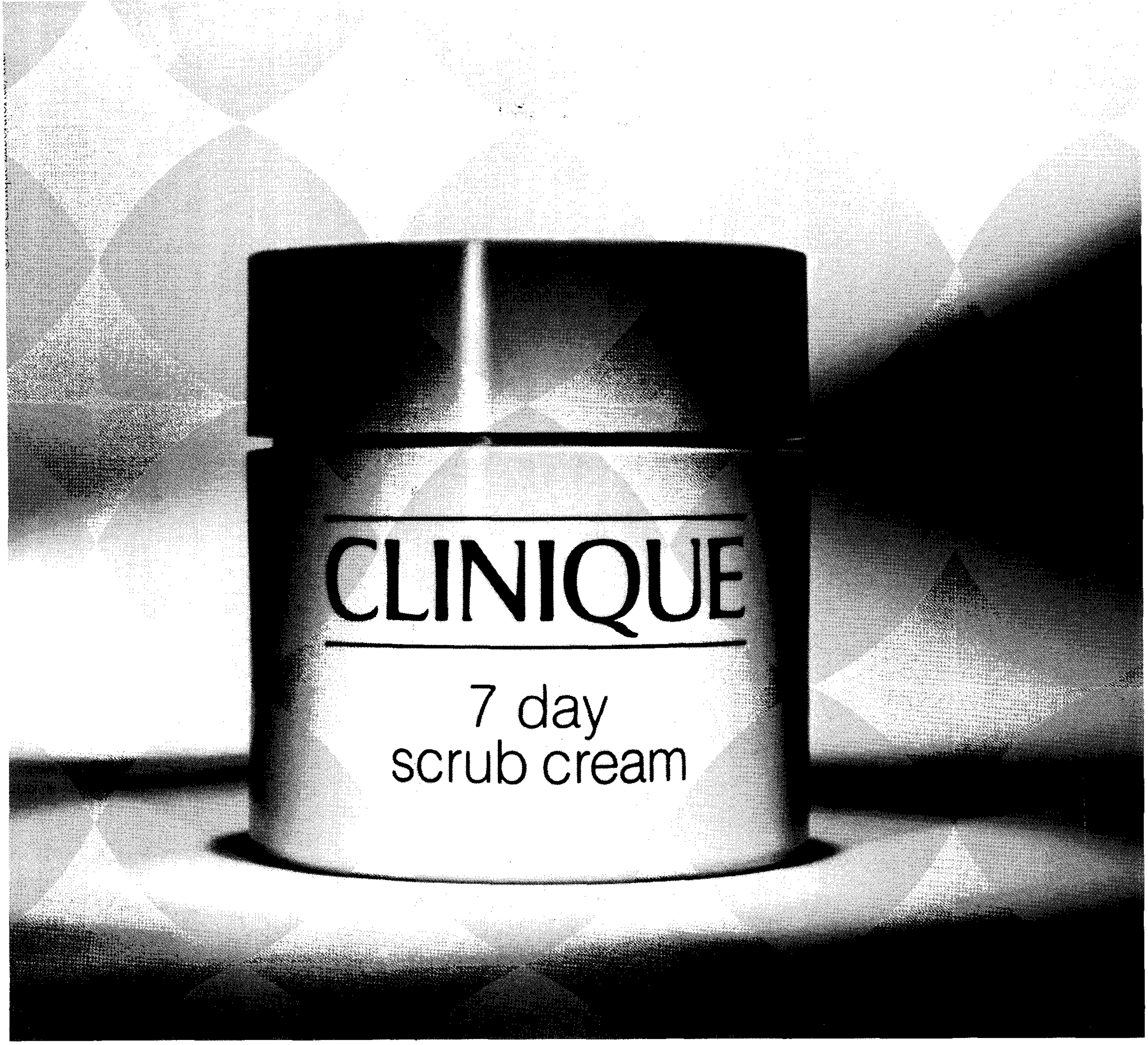

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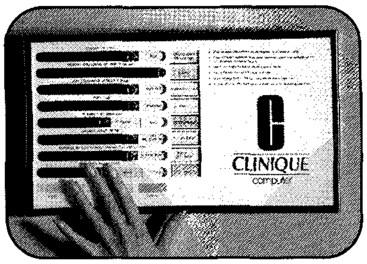

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

THE Manhattan Punch Line Theatre is now accepting submissions for its seventh annual festival of one-act comedies, according to a press release that recently crossed our desk. Submissions (accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope) should be sent to Steve Kaplan, Manhattan Punch Line's artistic director, at 410 West 42nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. The deadline is October 7.

We rang Mr. Kaplan the other day to ask him a couple of questions we thought might occur to an aspiring playwright. How many of the scripts the company selects are by *undiscovered* writers? And what if somebody sends a play that isn't actually a comedy? Mr. Kaplan told us that a third to half of all the plays presented in the festival each year are by writers whose work has never been professionally produced in New York before. He mentioned two of our favorite plays from recent seasons—Jeffrey Hatcher's "Fellow Travellers" and Stephen Gregg's "Sex Lives of Superheroes"—and added that Howard Korder was first produced in this way. In fact, "Boys' Life," which went on to be produced at Lincoln Center, began as a series of one-acts at the M.P.L. (A play called "Life on Earth," for instance, ended up as the scene between the jogger and the cynical young man.)

Mr. Kaplan's response to our second question was equally encouraging. "I think what we're looking for, rather than comedies," he said, "are comic voices. Korder's is a very bitter, bilious vision of the world, and yet it qualifies as comedy because it sees the world from its own slanted, unpretentious, unpompous point of view. I think that any voice that speaks of or sees the world honestly, with some amount of compassion and vitriol, is probably comic enough for us."

Mr. Kaplan told us that he gets a thousand submissions, of which six hundred will generally be about a playwright and an actress having dinner in a restaurant, talking about finding an apartment. "That's the play that we don't produce. What we try not to do is confuse complaint with comedy. Because everybody's got a complaint, and it's funny only to you and to your immediate relatives and to the people you give money to."

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

Camille—A revival of Charles Ludlam's 1973 play. With Everett Quinton, (who also directed), Georg Osterman, Eureka, and Jim Lamb. Previews through Sept. 5. Opens Sept. 6 at 8. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Square. 691-2271.)

Money Talks—A comedy by Edwin Schloss about two competitive Upper East Siders, who are played by Dolores Gray and Helen Gallagher. Previews through Sept. 5. Opens Sept. 6 at 7. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

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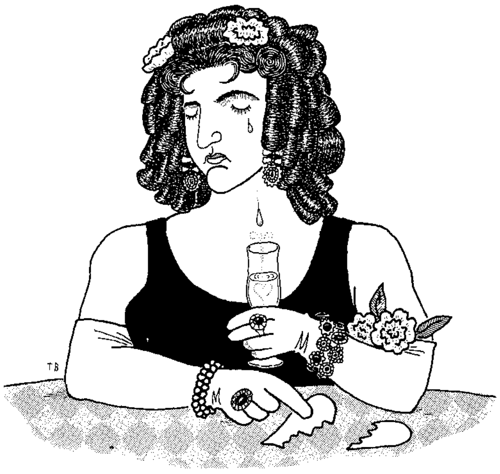
Whatnot—A musical comedy conceived and written by Howard Crabtree and Mark Waldrop, with a score and lyrics by Dick Gallagher. With Mr. Crabtree, John Treacy Egan, Mark Lazore, and Jennifer Smith. Previews begin Sept. 5. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. For information about tickets, call 688-6022.)



Everett Quinton in "Camille"

NEW THIS SEASON

Aspects of Love—Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest extravaganza, based on David Garnett's frail 1955 novel of the same title, aspires to good taste and sophistication (it's about artists and theatre folk rather than cats or trains) but ends up being a monument to vulgarity. The combination of Garnett's triviality and Lloyd Webber's pretentiousness produces something so empty it implodes. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/23/90.) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

By and for Havel—A pair of one-acters in revival. "By"—**AUDIENCE**—is based on an episode that occurred when Václav Havel had a menial job in a brewery; "for"—**CATASTROPHE**—is Samuel Beckett's poetic tribute to Havel when he was in prison. Together, they make *an evening that is both comic and stirring.* With Kevin O'Connor and Lou Brockway. (3/19/90) (John Houseman Studio Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

Carreño—A one-woman show based on the life of Teresa Carreño, the Venezuelan composer, pianist, conductor, and singer. Written and performed by Pamela Ross. Directed by Gene Frankel. (Intar, 420 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

City of Angels—Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; James Naughton and Gregg Edelman, leading men; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. The plot concerns the making of a private-eye movie (and the unmaking of its author). The spectacular settings and costumes were designed by Robin Wagner and Florence Klotz and lighted by Paul Gallo. (12/25/89) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

Forever Plaid—Stuart Ross's loving, tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. The performances of Jason Graae, Stan Chandler, David Engel, and Guy Stroman (as the Plaids, a close-harmony group snuffed out in the prime of life and brought back to earth for a single evening) are so deadpan, and the songs (arranged by James Raitt) are rendered at such a heightened pitch of musical good faith, that only from Ross's script and choreography would you know the thing is a parody. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)

Further Mo'—This lively, touching, and brilliantly performed small-scale musical, set in a New Orleans vaudeville theatre in 1927, is a real gem. Written by Vernel Bagneris (who *also stars), it uses blues singing (mostly quite* recherché songs) to say something about the plight of the black entertainer in American history and culture. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

Hosanna—Bill Repicci and M. D. Minichiello in a revival of the 1974 play by Michel Tremblay. Directed by Charlie Hensley. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 564-8038.)

Indecent Materials—A double bill: the curtain-raiser, "Indecent Materials," is an adaptation of some of Jesse Helms' speeches on the arts and obscenity; and "Report from the Holocaust" is an adaptation of Larry Kramer's essays on the AIDS crisis. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Sept. 9.)

It's Still My Turn—Terry Sweeney, a former "Saturday Night Live" *cast member, portrays* Nancy Reagan in this one-man show. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

Lettice & Lovage—The marvellous Maggie Smith plays Lettice Douffet, a freewheeling guide to England's stately homes, and the elegant Margaret Tyzack plays a reprimanding envoy sent by Lettice's employers in Peter Shaffer's merry comedy about an unlikely friendship and other matters. Paxton Whitehead and Bette Henritze are effective in supporting roles. Michael Blakemore was the director. (4/9/90) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Light Up the Sky—This revival—after forty-two years—of Moss Hart's comedy about the Boston tryout of a Broadway-bound play is intermittently funny. The most entertaining scenes are those with Betsy Joslyn, as a producer's wife, who's engaged in a non-stop gin game with Peggy Cass, the star's mother; and, near the end, with the invaluable Bill McCutcheon, as a visiting Shriner. Among the other admirable performers are John Bolger, Linda Carlson, Humbert Allen Astredo, and John C. Vennema. Larry Carpenter directed. The handsome setting, by Andrew Jackness, of a suite at the Ritz-Carlton, was lighted by Dennis Parichy, and Martin Pakledinaz designed the appropriate costumes. Whatever Mr. Hart's intentions were, affection supersedes satire every step of the way; he was stagestruck. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883. Closes Sept. 23.)

The Piano Lesson—August Wilson's new drama, the fourth in his series chronicling the black-American experience in the twentieth century, is set in Pittsburgh in 1936. In its exquisite writing and over-all structure (involving the conflict over a piano that figures hauntingly and intricately in one family's history) the play resembles "Joe Turner's Come and Gone" more than "Fences." Wilson takes refuge in an overly mystical and melodramatic ending, but there are some great scenes—even if the subtle ensemble acting in Lloyd Richards' production is thrown out of balance by an excessive performance by Charles S. Dutton. (4/30/90) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 582-4022.)

Prelude to a Kiss—Craig Lucas's entertaining romantic comedy slips into fantasy when an old man kisses a bride at her wedding. Barnard Hughes is the old man, Mary-Louise Parker is the bride, and John Dosset (substituting for Timothy Hutton, who returns on Sept. 12) is the groom. (3/26/90) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

Quiet on the Set—A comedy by Terrell Anthony about soap operas, which features a cast of actors from "All My Children" and "The Guiding Light." (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

The Rothschilds—A revival of the 1970 musical by Jerry Bock (score), Sheldon Harnick (lyrics), and Sherman Yellen (book), with a sixteen-member cast led by Mike Burstyn. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

Six Degrees of Separation—You're best off knowing nothing about the new John Guare play, other than that it represents a perfect meeting of the playwright and the director, Jerry Zaks. Out of a true story—one apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare has fashioned a wistful comedy about race, class, money, imagination, collective conscience, individual psyche, and the impulse toward art. What more do you want?

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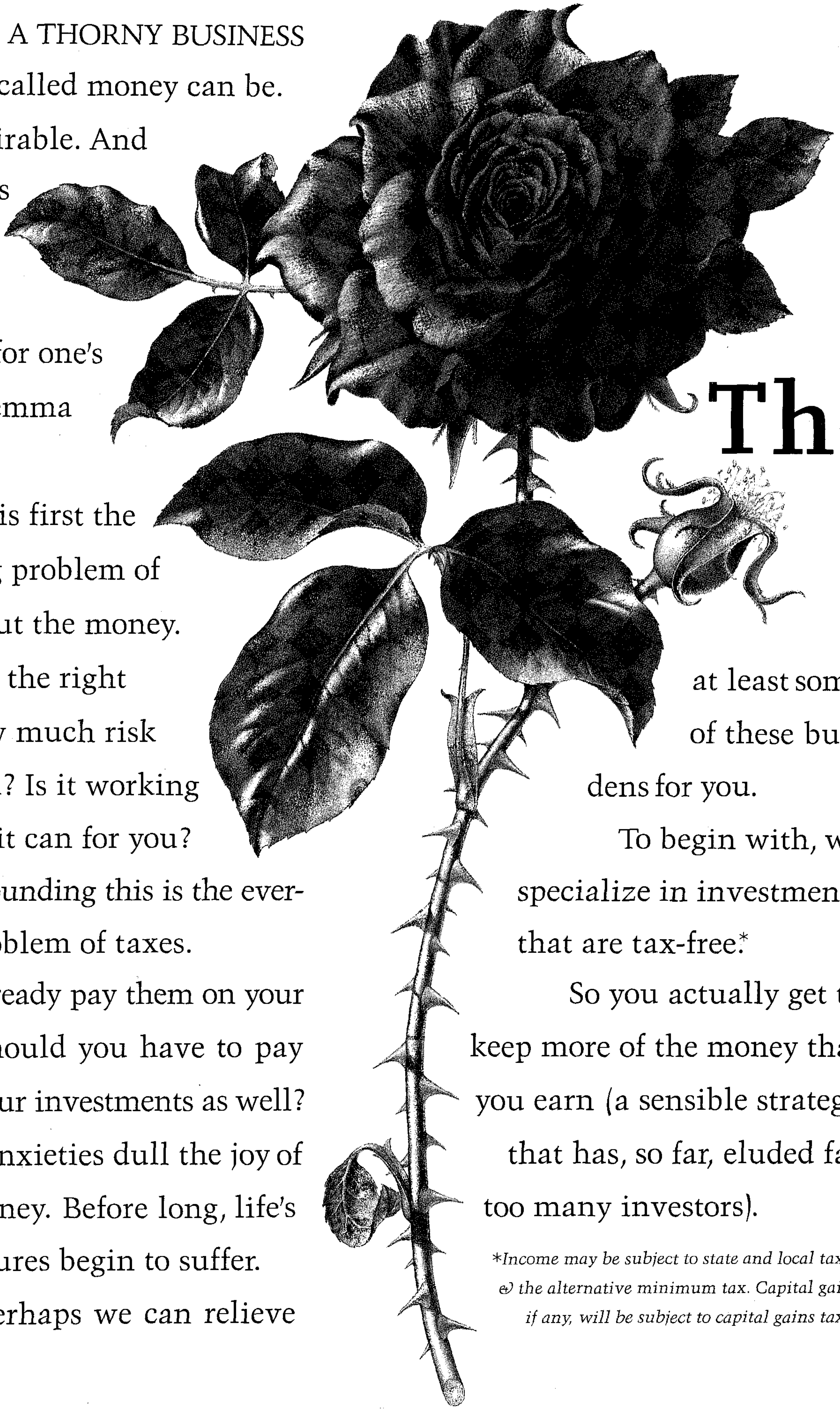

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With Swoosie Kurtz and Courtney B. Vance. (6/25/90) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Smoke on the Mountain—This loving satire of old-time gospel music, set in 1938, is perfectly delightful. Written by Connie Ray (who also performs, along with six other versatile actor-musicians), it re-creates a Saturday-night service at a small church in rural North Carolina, where a family of more or less devout gospel singers have been invited to appear. (Lambs Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

LONG RUNS

BLACK AND BLUE: An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while LaVern Baker, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run celebrated its thirtieth birthday last May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **A FEW GOOD MEN:** "Mister Roberts" meets "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." Aaron Sorkin's military-courtroom drama treats issues such as justice, honor, loyalty, and morality with the slick, facile smugness of a half-hour comedy series, but the performances, by an ace cast under Don Scardino's direction, are wonderful. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1990:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **GRAND HOTEL:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show (except for a glorious, eccentric dance by Michael Jeter), but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **GYPSY:** This revival of the great Sondheim-Styne-Laurents-Robbins musical (directed by Arthur Laurents himself) is so delightful—and the cast so engaging—that we think anyone would be happier for having seen it. One suggestion: don't applaud when Mama Rose comes down the aisle (you'll drown out the first number). With Linda Lavin. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Beth Ehlers and Kate Collins in "Quiet on the Set"

DANCE

IN theory, any music can be choreographed. In practice, some music is more readily danceable: Bizet's Symphony in C, Glenn Miller's "In the Mood," the ancient drum songs of Senegal, a strict hornpipe, the oeuvres of Tchaikovsky and de Falla, the output of the Supremes. Is there such a thing as a dance element in music? Rhythm isn't quite answer enough. The work of Beethoven, Wagner, Boulez, and Jimi Hendrix can be analyzed for rhythm, yet most of it doesn't get the body going automatically. What is the special, kinetic quality that rhythm must have to make a piece of music seem to lift and lighten and move?

Our thoughts on this subject were set in motion by a recent discussion we heard at the Metropolitan Museum, "Dances of Italy and Spain: Overview of Piano and Orchestral Music from the Saltarello to the Habanera and Jota." It was the last of ten talks in a series entitled "Great Composers and Their Favorite Dances," delivered by the pianist and conductor Karl Haas. Mr. Haas is of the view that Spanish music was the cradle of musical dance forms in Europe, owing primarily to Spain's long absorption of complex musical rhythms through North Africa. As for what makes musical rhythm into dance rhythm, he suggests that the more leeway music gives for the most basic physical expression within a predictable framework, the more danceable it is. He cited de Falla's masterpiece for Diaghilev, "The Three-Cornered Hat." That score, he said, "uses the power of repeated tones, but such repetition alone wouldn't work theatrically. It is the repetition coupled with the gradual crescendo that does so much to create excitement." Later, we asked him how he, as a professional musician, attends to dance in the theatre. "There are those who let the music wash over them without any idea of what it's about," he said. "The same with dance. But dance always spells out the story of the music. You have to know what the music and the dance represent, what the composer and choreographer were about, what their relationships were to the time in which they lived. Dance isn't just a bunch of steps, nor music a bunch of notes."

NIGHT LIFE

THE old joke about the Velvet Underground—that very few people bought their albums but that everybody who did started a band—isn't funny anymore. These days, every other group invokes the Velvets. In record reviews, the phrase "Lou Reed deadpan" has eclipsed even "Byrds-like guitar" and "guest appearance by Bruce Hornsby." Two of the latest groups in this ancient tradition are Mazzy Star and Ultra Vivid Scene. The former, which appeared at Woody's not long ago, has released a great, spooky, dispassionate début entitled "She Hangs Brightly." Part alternative music and part killing-spree country, Mazzy Star sounds like what the Cowboy Junkies were *supposed* to sound like—and still might if only the right producer would come along and throw cold water in their faces.

Ultra Vivid Scene, which will be at Maxwell's on September 28, doesn't transfix one the way Mazzy Star does. This is mostly because the singer-songwriter Kurt Ralske's voice tends to get lost in the mix. Still, there is some nice, edgy pop on Ultra Vivid Scene's first major-label album, "Joy 1967-1990," especially the single "Staring at the Sun," which recalls "Reckoning"-era R.E.M., and "Special One," which features the Pixies' Kim Deal. Both Mazzy Star and Ultra Vivid Scene are worth a listen, although neither is likely to send you running to start a band.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

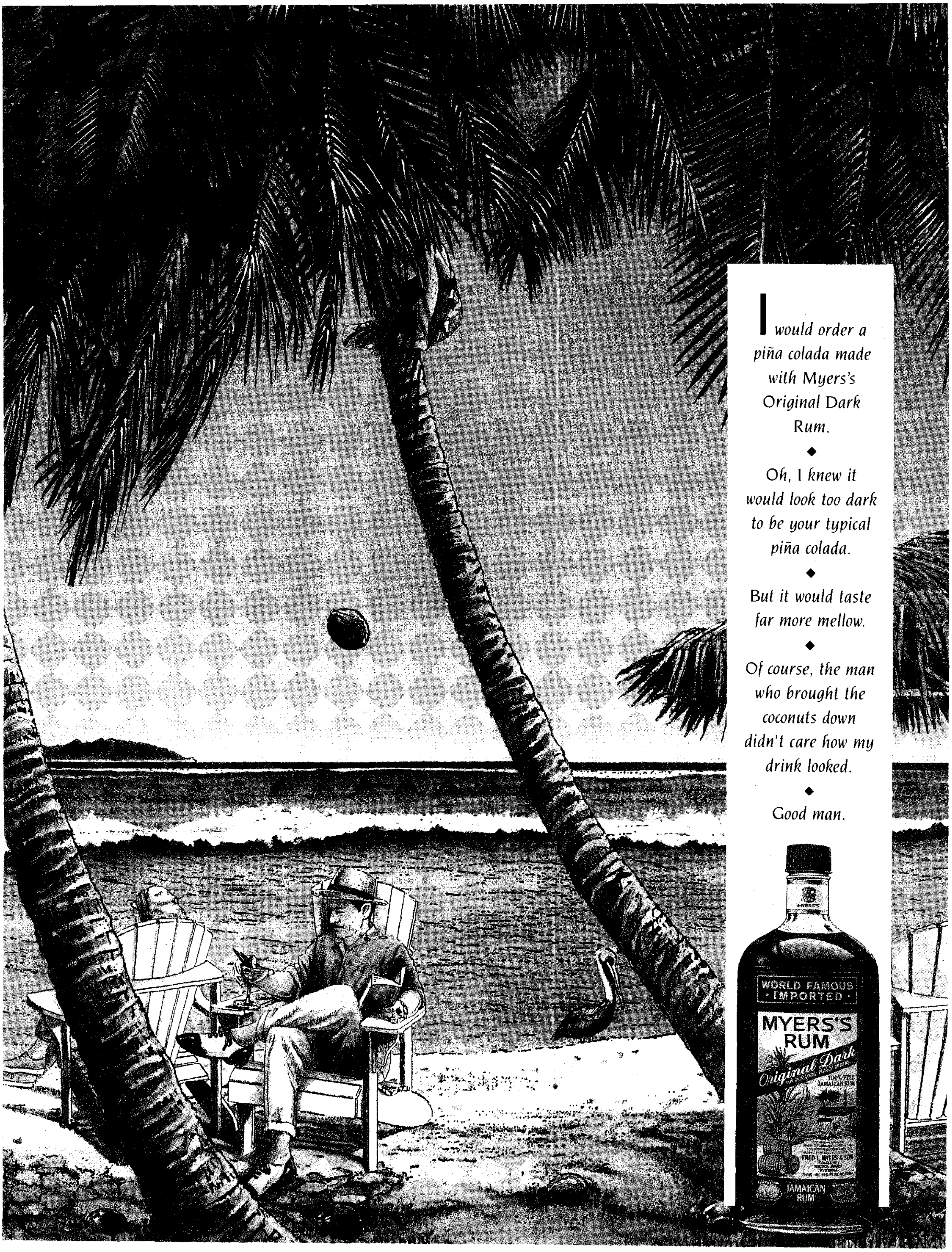
Apollo, 253 W. 125th St. (864-0372)—On Wednesdays, the theatre presents Amateur Night, a continuation of the legendary show that has launched the careers of such performers as Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald, Sammy Davis, Jr., and Billie Holiday. Vocalists, dancers, musicians, and comedians participate. It's a chance to file away a memory for a later "I knew him/her when." Show time is seven-thirty.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A sleek cabaret on the edge of Chelsea, near the flower and fur markets. The entrancing magician **JEFF MC BRIDE,** who, with his giant red mane and elaborate costumes, looks like a cross between Tina Turner and a Kabuki dancer, is in residence.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A glitzy, color-coördinated jazz house, designed for maximum seating efficiency, where blue-suspendered waitresses sweep by your table bearing shrimp cocktails, champagne, and other trappings of the good life. After the show, out-of-towners flock to the upstairs souvenir shop, where, at last check, Blue Note golf balls were still available. **TONY WILLIAMS,** an explosive fusionist drummer who began his career as a teen-ager in the Miles Davis quintet, heads his own quintet Sept. 4-9. They're joined by a trio led by another drumming powerhouse, **BILLY COBHAM.** Guitarist **AL DI MEOLA** begins an engagement on Sept. 11. Music begins around nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. **RONNIE SPECTOR,** whom baby boomers will remember from the Ronettes, checks in Sept. 7-8; moving ahead a few years, the club presents the seventies funksters **TOWER OF POWER** Sept. 11-12. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Burgers,

THE IDEA HIT ME RIGHT UPON THE HEAD.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But it would taste far more mellow.

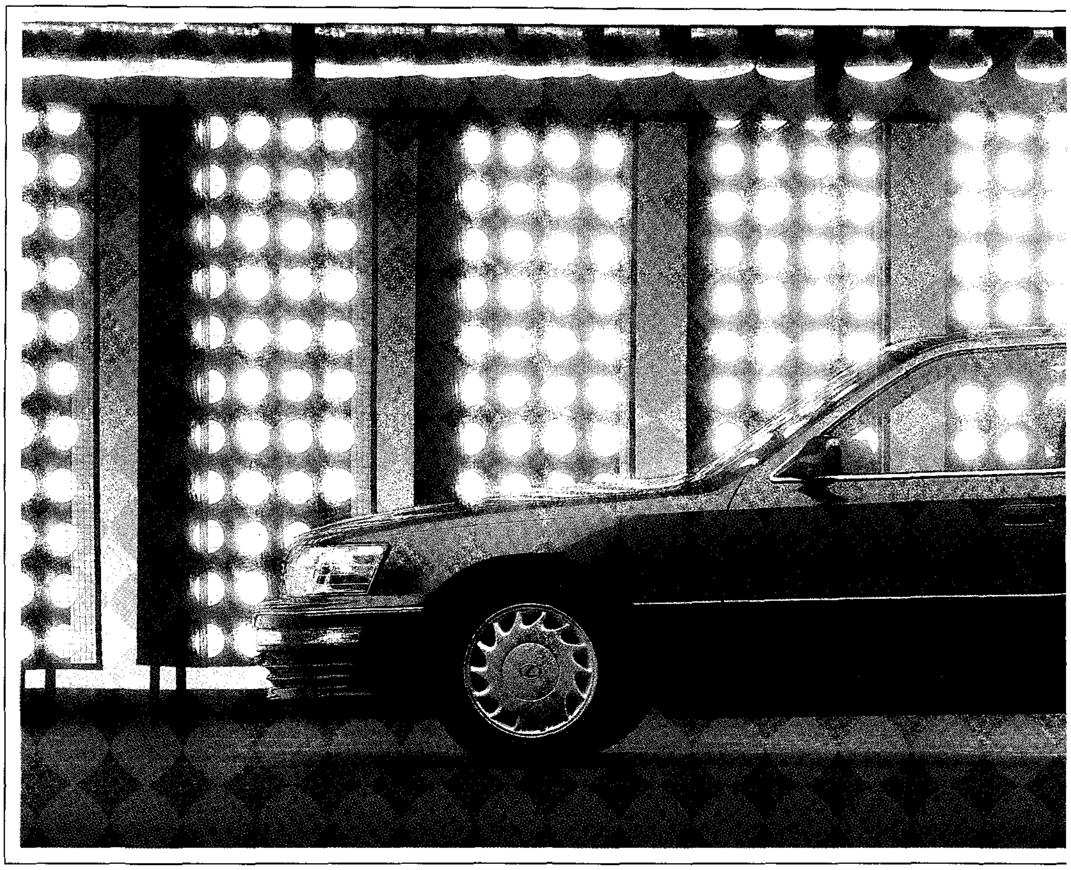
◆

Of course, the man who brought the coconuts down didn't care how my drink looked.

◆

Good man.

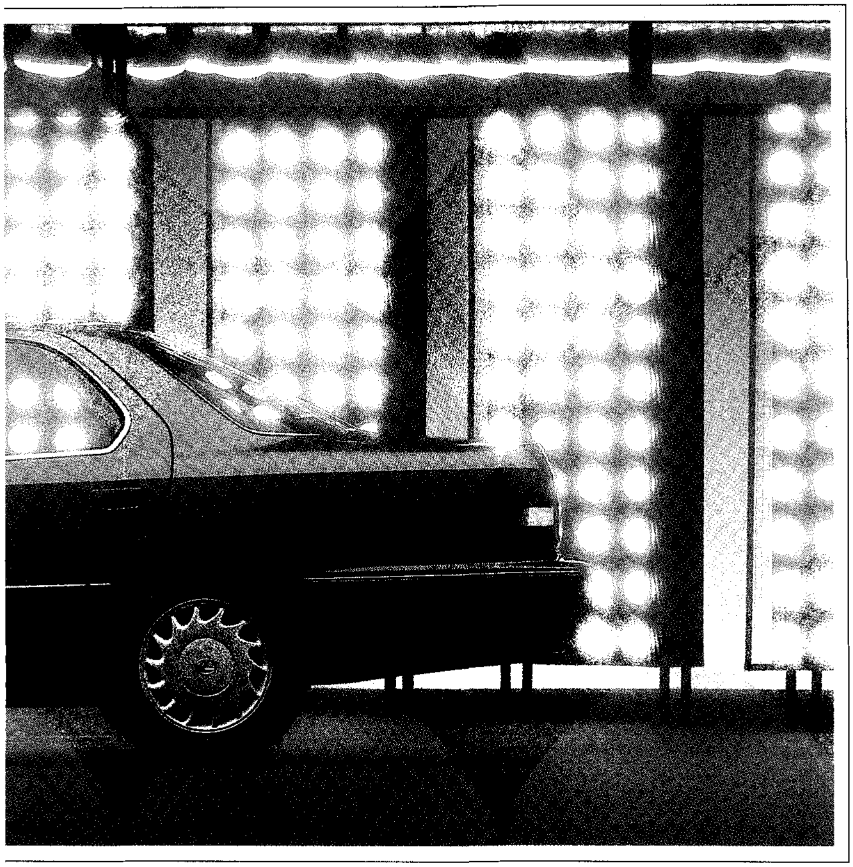
MYERS'S RUM • 40% ALC./VOL. (80°) • IMPORTED & BOTTLED BY THE FRED L. MYERS & SON CO. • BALTIMORE, MD. © 1990



Before It Saw The Ligh
It Saw The Light Of Cour

It's called a light-fade test. For hours on end, various surfaces and materials of the LS 400 were blasted as if by the sun.

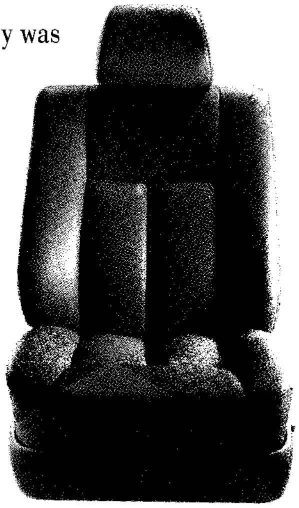
Why? Because contrary to th old cliché, there is no such thing a "timeless beauty." In fact, beauty i very much a factor of time.



f Day,
ss Days.

The engineers at Lexus know is. That is why an entire task force as created to investigate ways of ghting age and maintaining the value of your investment.

The result is a luxury sedan whose luxury was fashioned with one eye to the future as well as the present.



The optional handworked leather on the seats and trim is designed to resist bleaching by the sun. The burnished California Walnut on the doors and center console is designed to resist fading and cracking. And the exterior finish incorporating up to 42 steps is designed to maintain its rich gloss and luster.

In all, 96 items were studied as part of our anti-aging program. When a surface proved too sensitive to sunlight or the oils from human skin, the offending material was reformulated, again and again if necessary.

So see the dealer nearest you to discover what sets the LS 400 apart: Any car can be new today.

We want to be new tomorrow.

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fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A cozy neighborhood bar where, if your neighbors coöperate, you can hear the beautiful, singular sound of musicians thinking. The evenings of Sept. 3-8 belong to the trio of pianist **BERTHA HOPE**, saxophonist **RALPH LALAMA**, and bassist **WALTER BOOKER**. Pianist **MULGREW MILLER** and bassist **IRA COLEMAN** will come in for the week beginning Sept. 10. Music begins at nine-forty-five. Dining.

Cassandra Wilson at Fat Tuesday's

Cat Club, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—Every Sunday night, this club, usually dominated by heavy-metal acts, is ceded to a gang of Lindy Hop enthusiasts called the New York Swing Dance Society. An older couple glides across the floor at an easy pace; an eager young man throws his date around like a crazed cossack. The cosmically inclined **SUN RA**—a new-jazz proponent in the late sixties and, at present, a headdress-wearing keyboardist whose shows are often multimedia events—will be here Sept. 9. Music from eight to midnight.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—In the late seventies and early eighties, this dark cave (graffiti-filled walls, a battered pool table, rest rooms for the intrepid only) was the hub of a thriving punk-music scene. Local rock has since diminished, but while other clubs of the era have fizzled, CB's perseveres, and young hopefuls continue to fill the stage nightly. Music from eight-thirty on Sundays through Thursdays, and from nine-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

Condon's, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—In the shadow of the Zeckendorf Towers sits this low-ceilinged, stucco-walled grotto, whose intimate scale makes it a fine spot for jazz. The **FRANK WESS** quartet starts up on Sept. 11. Music after ten.

Dan Lynch, 221 Second Ave., at 14th St. (677-0911)—Outside Dan Lynch, you'll come across a lot of suspicious characters who'll claim to know you; inside you'll find a pupil-dilating, brown-on-brown bar decorated with remnants of a birch tree. The place brightens up considerably at ten with a variety of live blues, including vamps of the "put on your red dress" variety.

Delta 88, 332 Eighth Ave., at 26th St. (924-3499)—A pleasant hangout for white-collar trash, where you'll find cold Dixie beer, collard greens, and plenty of men who know how to wear a leather vest. As if that weren't enough, the bar-and-restaurant also features a corrugated-tin ceiling and a truckload of sort-of-Southern items: a photo booth, a giant Amoco sign, an Evel Knievel lunchbox. Most nights, the buffet turns into a bandstand at nine. Chicken-fried steak, deep-fried crawdads (a.k.a. Cajun popcorn), and other exotic Southern fare.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—If submarines had jazz clubs, they might look like this basement haunt, which is reached by passing through a tight corridor where you half expect to bump into Admiral Nimitz. This is not the place for those with a fear of intimacy: at the front tables you can go eye to eye with your favorite performers, and no matter where you're seated there's not much room to practice your T'ai Chi. Singer and composer **CASSANDRA WILSON**, whose tricky, angular songs run from jazz to funk to reggae, begins a week-long stand on Sept. 11. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL**, the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

Fortune Garden Pavilion, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—Chinese food served in a plush greenhouse setting. Through the glass roof, which supports a jungle of potted greenery, you can admire the fruits of the midtown real-estate boom and, when available, the moon. Trombonist **AL GREY**, a longtime Basie-band star, works with guitarist **JOE COHN** and bassist **J. J. WIGGINS** Sept. 4-9. Beginning Sept. 11: pianist **MIKE WOFFORD** and bassist **STEVE LA SPINA**. Music from eight Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

Gonzalez y Gonzalez, 625 Broadway, at Houston St. (473-8787)—Loud, brash, and big. The theme is, of course, Mexican, and you get the whole enchilada—a giant cactus here, a parade-float sombrero there, animal skulls and red-chili clusters everywhere. The stage is in the rear, which is about a city block from the entrance.

J's, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—An unpretentious second-floor jazz club. The **RANDA MC NAMARA** quartet is here on Sept. 7; the **KEN PEPLOWSKI** quintet on Sept. 8; **DICK HYMAN** on Sept. 10; and **RICHARD RODNEY BENNETT** on Sept. 11. Music from eight Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Kilimanjaro, 531 W. 19th St. (627-2333)—The northern branch of the popular Washington, D.C., night spot. As the name suggests, African music is the sine qua non, be it live or d.j.-spun. Calypso, reggae, and world-beat formats also turn up; in any case, the huge dance floor seldom lies fallow. Byron Lee and the Dragonaires, a Jamaican group, will be in on Sept. 7.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy bar-and-grill in the piano-bass district. The duos: **JUNIOR MANCE** and **MARTY RIVERA** Sept. 4-8; **BILLY CHARLAP** and **JAY LEONHART** starting Sept. 11. Music from about nine-thirty.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A second-floor club for fusionist hoedowns. The room is run by two amiable young guys from Wisconsin, whose views on such things as cover charges are enlightened. A few of this week's offerings: **MARC RIBOT'S ROOTLESS COSMOPOLITANS** (Sept. 5), **LYDIA LUNCH** (Sept. 6), the **ORDINAIRES** (Sept. 8), **THIRD PERSON** and **ELLIOTT SHARP'S** Six Keyboard Ensemble (Sept. 9). Music begins after nine.

Lauterbach's Brooklyn Beat, 335 Prospect Ave., at Sixth Ave., Brooklyn. (1-718 788-9140)—A grungy but well-intentioned watering hole devoted to homegrown Brooklyn bands. The emphasis here is on exposed cement, although one wall is decorated with Polaroids—"St. Patty's 1986" (people in green hats and leis), "New Year's 1988-89" (people in red hats and leis). Lauterbach's microwave menu includes shepherd's pie and chicken parmigiana, but the musical menu is almost always a better bet.

Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A cheery, climate-controlled restaurant-and-bar featuring a load of snazzy Gibson guitars, some Washington Square-style portraits of folks like Bo Diddley and Dr. John, and funky French fry–potato chip hybrids. A bleary-eyed patron here was recently heard remarking, "I don't know about you people, but I'm feeling a lot of love in this room." **JOHN CAFFERTY** and the **BEAVER BROWN BAND** come in on Sept. 8, and **BLUES TRAVELER** performs on Sept. 12. Music after nine.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—A recent addition to the little-heralded Upper East Side club scene. Don't go expecting to be sprayed with soapy water and massaged by large brushes: the fluorescent sign outside is the only car-wash reference. Inside, the place looks like an adman's idea of a blues bar. A few highlights: Sept. 6, **BOBBY RADCLIFF**; Sept. 7-8, the **CHRIS CARTER** blues band; Sept. 12, **LUTHER (GUITAR JUNIOR) JOHNSON**.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A good sound system, cheap drinks, and a regular-guy atmosphere make this restaurant-bar, home of the Hoboken Sound and of the phrase "jangly guitars," a popular hangout for musicians and their followers. Manhattanites who stay through the second set will need all their Scout training to get home, but the strong aroma of the nearby Maxwell House factory might give them a boost.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A mid-Manhattan pub for well-heeled gents and high-heeled ladies. Singer **BARBARA LEA** can be found here through Sept. 8, in a program devoted to Lee Wiley, a singer who was popular in the nineteen-thirties. **MEL TORMÉ** and the **BUDDY RICH BAND** begin a month-long stint on Sept. 11. Dining. Closed Sundays.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret where a club soda costs about eight dollars. There are plenty of niceties if you're so inclined: an ear-popping express elevator in which you can mingle with the famous; tables scattered with plastic diamonds and sapphires; and rest-room attendants who hover near the sink asking, "Is the water too warm?" **SUSAN ANTON** has just begun a three-week stay here. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—It may look like a plain old steak house, and the photos on the walls may look like Sardi's leftovers, but in the back room you'll find swing bands, Dixieland combos, and couples sprung from the legacy of Fred and Ginger. **VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS** are here on Tuesdays. Music from six on Sundays, from eight-thirty Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays.

Ritz, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—There's usually a good reason to go the Ritz, but there's almost always a better reason to stay away. Even leaving aside its new midtown address—the sort of neighborhood you wake up in after you've been kidnapped—there's still the club's distressing pack-them-in, get-them-the-hell-out management tactics, and the fact that the atmosphere here, on any given night, is something between that of a high-school gym class and a police state. The metal outfit **EXODUS** comes in Sept. 7-8. With them will be **SUICIDAL TENDENCIES**, a hard-core band from Venice, California, who are known for raucous, tempo-shifting songs like "Fascist Pig," "Suicide's an Alternative," and the wonderfully fierce "Institutionalized"—a number that is used in the film "Repo Man" and that chronicles a young man's not-so-simple quest for a Pepsi. Shows begin at nine Sundays through Thursdays, and at eleven Fridays and Saturdays.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night, can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. **RON CARTER**—a Michigan-born bassist who spent the sixties working with Thelonious Monk and Miles Davis and whose flawless technique can be heard on roughly a thousand albums—leads his quintet here through Sept. 9. The **JOHN SCOFIELD** quartet starts up on Sept. 11. The electrified big band of the late Gil Evans, now under the direction of his son, the trumpeter Miles Evans, is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the downstairs room, which is as big and plain as a mess hall, Mondays after nine are set aside for salsa bands. **EDDIE PALMIERI**, **PAPO LUCCA** y la Sonora Poncena, and **KENNY BARRON** perform on Sept. 10, in a program entitled "A Night of Pianos." . . . ¶ One flight up, in the Terrace Bar, the Mike Longo Trio, with Ben Brown on bass and Leon Parker on drums, performs Sept. 5-9, and resumes Sept. 12. Music from ten.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This windowless, pie-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. The décor is homey and a little faded, like an atticful of memorabilia, but the music is anything but stale. The **MINGUS DYNASTY BAND** will be here through Sept. 9; the **BOBBY WATSON HORIZON QUINTET** begins work on Sept. 11. Mondays are reserved for the late Mel Lewis's big band. Music after ten.

If you're looking for lean, you're in Luck.

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I'd like to tell you a juicy story. A story everyone in Luck, Wisconsin knows. It's about herb marinated beef steak. It's about braised steak provençal and broiled steaks with company potatoes. But most of all, it's about good fortune. Because many cuts of beef are surprisingly low in calories. Lower than most people think. A lean, trimmed three-ounce serving averages less than 200 calories. Round tip, for example, hardly tops 149 calories. That's an inspiration to anyone holding a menu. Or following a diet. You know, according to legend, the town of Luck was named by Dan Smith, an early logger. Having faced much adversity in life, he solved the problem by always being "in Luck." Today, our luck is still pretty good —delicious, in fact. Where would we be without beef? Out of luck, I'd say. See you in the next town.

THE SKINNIEST SIX

ROUND TIP 157 calories
5.9 gms total fat* (2.1 gms sat. fat)

TOP ROUND 153 calories
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TOP LOIN 176 calories
8.0 gms total fat* (3.1 gms sat. fat)

EYE OF ROUND 143 calories
4.2 gms total fat* (1.5 gms sat. fat)

TENDERLOIN 179 calories
8.5 gms total fat* (3.2 gms sat. fat)

TOP SIRLOIN 165 calories
6.1 gms total fat* (2.4 gms sat. fat)

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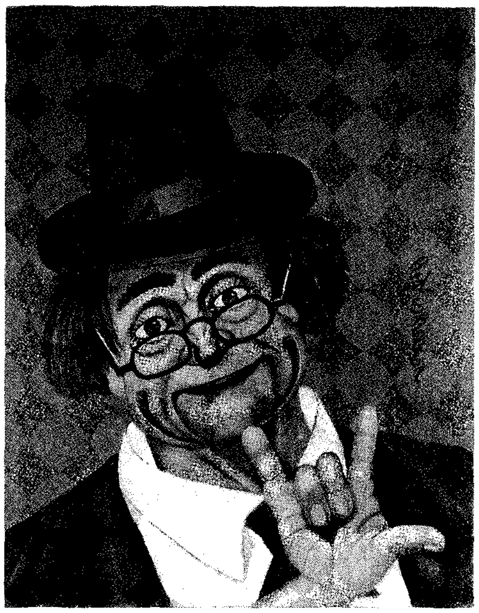
*Sources: USDA Handbook 8-13 1990 Rev., U.S. RDA National Research Council 1980, 10th Edition. Figures are for a cooked and trimmed 3 oz. serving. 4 oz. uncooked yield 3 oz. cooked. For a beef recipe booklet, write the B.I.C., Dept. T, 444 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611. Please enclose 50¢. ©1990 Beef Industry Council and Beef Board.

NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Two floors of no-nuke veggie entertainment and consciousness-raising. Listen to bands play in the Summer of Love-muralled back room; buy a tie-dyed T-shirt at the Volkswagen-bus curio shop; catch up on current events at the bulletin board and community calendar. Or, if you'd rather just be mellow, crash out in the basement hippie love pad.

Woody's, 82 E. 4th St. (982-3686)—A surprisingly reliable showcase for alternative bands. Rolling Stones guitarist Ron Wood's club is a basic-black basement with mirrors, comfy couches, and rotating spotlights. Stones memorabilia, with an emphasis on Ronnie himself, provide the primary decoration. Singer-guitarist **JOHN DOE,** who'll perform here Sept. 6, is taking a vacation from X, the L.A. band whose album "Wild Gift" is considered by many to be America's finest contribution to punk. Doe's recently released solo effort, "Meet John Doe," is a strong record; there's a good deal of stomping, but there are some subdued moments, too. Shows Wednesdays through Saturdays, from about eleven. There's also an art gallery upstairs (entrance at 65 Second Avenue), where the collected works of Woody—rock-star portraits, mainly—are now on display.



Self-portrait by Red Skelton

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you might go to eat even if there were no music. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. Sept. 4-8: pianist **MIKE LE DONNE,** saxophonist **JOE TEMPERLEY,** and bassist **DENNIS IRWIN.** Beginning Sept. 10: pianist **KIRK LIGHTSEY** and bassist **CECIL MC BEE.** Music from eight weeknights, and Sundays from seven.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

THERE were thirty-five names on the flyer announcing the most recent Outlaw Party. The event lasted barely long enough to recite them all. At least half of those we were asked to "join" didn't arrive in time to participate. Maybe because they had trouble finding it. The invitation located the party "in the parking lot on 25th Street between 7 & 8 Ave!!" There is no parking lot on Twenty-fifth between Seventh and Eighth Avenues. There's one between Sixth and Seventh. But more likely most of the names never made it because although the party started at "10 p.m. SHARP!" as promised, it was all over at ten-eighteen.

Naturally, what makes an Outlaw Party an outlaw party is that it isn't legal. There is no permit to use the space or to serve booze. The weather was not permitting either, but that didn't stop about a hundred and fifty young people—some in whiteface, in goldface, or with blue hair. One person sported a chicken suit, another dressed as a bloodhound, and several came in black more severe than what's worn at a priest's funeral on Cyprus. What did stop the guests was the police. Spoilsports. It must be admitted, however, that they "did their duty" as gently as possible. The police car pulled into the lot slowly—an act that immediately dispersed the crowd hanging over the makeshift bar like ivy on a damp brick wall—and a voice from its loudspeaker asked, "Who is the leader of your planet?" The police did nothing else except refuse to leave. "Is that what an outlaw party means?" a novitiate asked. "That you get out when the law comes?" It sure seemed that way. "Now what?" a veteran moaned. "I don't get all dressed up to stay at home." "Yes, you do, all the time," his friend said. "Not this early," the vet fired back. "I always feel overdressed before midnight. Can't we stay here just a teensy bit longer, please?" he asked the officer. Ten minutes later, the only ones left in the parking lot were wearing basic blue.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Red Skelton—Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Sept. 12 at 8.

"Legend of the Water Flame"—Flute playing, dancing, and storytelling. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 752-3015. Sept. 6-8 at 8.)

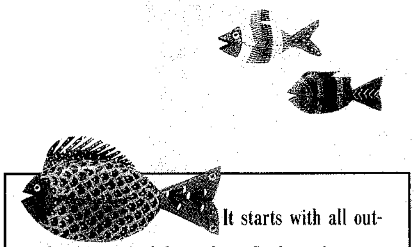
ART

DURING these cat-and-dog days—the latest manifestation of the new American weather—we were reminded of our early schooling, at the Lycée Français de New York, where our anatomy teachers stressed the digestive system and our geography lessons were given to flamboyant reports of global weather conditions. New York, we learned from our chauvinistic French textbooks, is at "roughly the latitude of Madrid, yet suffers the winters of Moscow and the summers of Dakar." An outdated comparison like this one (Brussels and Rangoon would be closer to current reality) nonetheless provides a note of Romantic solace to those of us here in town, unair-conditioned, and living in studio apartments that are suffering belated spring cleaning and the sort of do-you-scrape-the-floors-first-or-paint-the-walls rehaul you're supposed to do *before* you move in. We came close to rolling up our carpet and heading for the new Hotel Paramount, where we might spend better-ventilated evenings under the gaze of the nice, big Vermeer girl, but—*hélas!*—we went to the Frick instead (1 East 70th Street). We shopped for headboard ideas among the disproportionately large number of portraits in the collection.

A sense of emotional balance and social polish was what we were looking for. This eliminated religious works, as well as the stern visages in Holbein's portraits of Thomas Cromwell and Sir Thomas More—not the man for this season. The Rembrandts looked too much like older relatives of ours, and the Van Dycks, to be sure, were too grand for our life. Ingres's "Comtesse d'Haussonville" and Bronzino's portrait "Lodovico Capponi" were simply too obsessional; along with Goya's portrait "An Officer (Conde de Tepa?)," they might disturb us into thinking they were our significant others. David's "Comtesse Daru," so frank-looking and jolly, was for a moment a contender, but we worried that we would start to look like her—she was described by her friend Stendhal as having "very thick eyebrows" and being "rather stout." The Whistlers, on the other hand, might make us just a bit too anxious about our appearance, though the "Comte de Montesquiou" has not quite been ruled out. The eighteenth-century English portraitists basically won the day. Romney's "Lady Hamilton as 'Nature'" is in the running for obvious reasons. So is Hogarth's "Miss Mary Edwards"—that keen expression could get one up early each morning! Also, Gainsborough's "Lady Innes" and Reynolds' "Lady Skipwith," because both reminded us of one of our favorite actresses, the swamp-voiced and whippetlike Joan Greenwood, who would have been welcome at our pad any time and any way.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—A retrospective featuring eighty paintings and thirty drawings by the British artist Joseph Wright (1734-97). Starts Sept. 7. . . . ¶ "Art of Central Africa" is a dense and compact show drawn from the nineteenth-century holdings of the Museum für Völkerkunde, in Berlin, and includes some of the finest works known from Angola, the People's Republic of Congo, and southern Zaire. The range is quite extraordinary, but the strongest works are the "power figures," which were used for curing afflictions and for revenge. Each figure has an intense gaze, usually with its tongue sticking out of a rounded mouth, as if it were in some remote, drugged state. The most riveting figure is almost completely covered with fierce iron spikes, which were driven into it to unleash its powers. Through Nov. 4. . . . ¶ "Chess and Art." Perhaps Duchamp would have abandoned making art for the cerebral game of chess had he been the holder of this offbeat collection of fanciful chess sets. Included are chess pieces from various Middle Eastern cultures dating from the seventh century to the twelfth; a travelling set from nineteen-twenties Nigeria with a rollable board of hide; a particularly elaborate fourteenth-century European knight carved in walrus tusk in the form of St. George and the Dragon; and the famed "Crimean War" set from the mid-nineteenth century, with the white side representing the coalition against Russia, the major pieces being portraits of the various European and North African members of the alliance (the Russian aristocracy, ironically, are the reds). There is also a particularly surreal set from 1885, with owls, walruses, and bears, and Man Ray's enigmatic geometric sets, with their own understated surreal touch. . . . ¶ "Reflections of the Floating World," an exhibition of Japanese Edo Period



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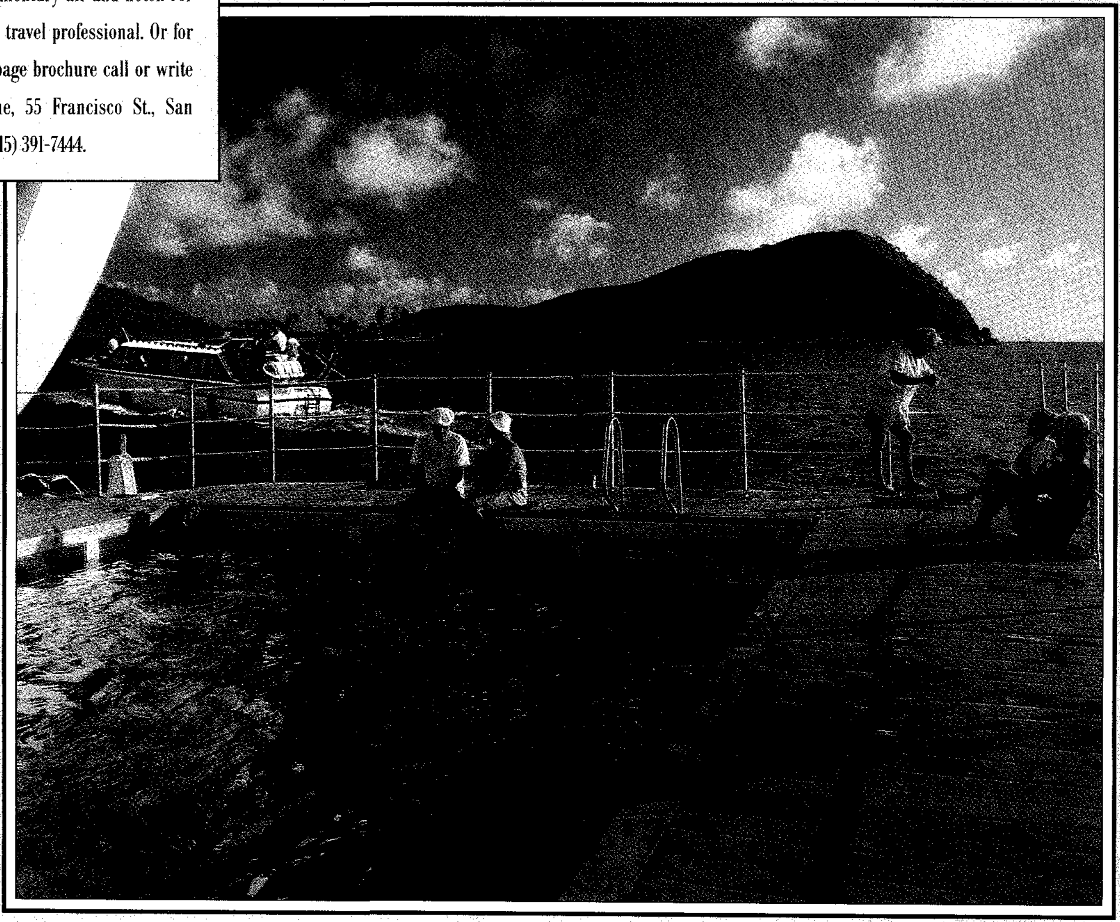

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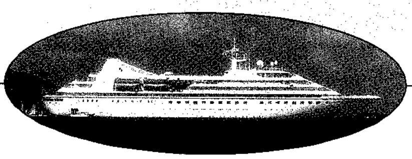

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(1603-1868) wood-block prints that deal with the reflective quality of mirrors and water. Included are works by Utamaro, Hokusai, and Hiroshige. Through Oct. 28. . . . ¶ More than sixty sets of clothing worn by children from the eighteenth century to the twentieth are on view in the Costume Institute. Through Sept. 9. . . . **NOTE:** The museum's roof garden is open (when the weather is fine), with a new lineup of twentieth-century sculptures and a sixty-five-foot shade-providing pergola. Through Oct. 28. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"First Light." Printmaking is not a medium one would expect James Turrell to excel at, but this suite of twenty etchings is glorious. Each depicts a white "light" form—a triangle, a cube, a plane—floating in an otherwise darkened room, usually in a corner. The viewer is drawn to each form like a bug to light, and the effect is similar to that of the artist's sublime light environments. They recall the early corner paintings of Robert Moskowitz, but they are much more sensate. With their progression of shapes they are also reminiscent of the systemic drawings and prints of Sol LeWitt, although they are mysterious in a way LeWitt's never are. Through Nov. 13. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until autumn, 1991.

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A group of ten grisaille drawings by Ed Ruscha called "Some Los Angeles Apartments," made in 1965 in conjunction with the photography book of the same name. Ruscha is an artist who loves the look of graphics, and in these renderings of postwar residential buildings, such as the Bronson Tropics, the Normandie, and the Beverly Glen, you can see how meticulously he emulates the effects of airbrushing and other tricks. There is almost always a poetic absurdism to Ruscha's work. Here it is the fact that these portraits of existing apartment houses look like architectural proposals that have come straight off the drawing board. They are drawn as if they were meant to convince a developer. It is both funny and touching that this artist could find such vast and untrammelled hope in response to a world that inspired someone else to create a "Day of the Locust." Through Oct. 14. . . . ¶ If an artist's value were measured by his influence, Hans Hofmann (1880-1966) would certainly be among the most important of this century: he trained more young American hopefuls than anyone else. But one need only look at MOMA's current "Matisse in Morocco" show to realize that Hofmann was a fine but ultimately minor artist. He certainly knew how to paint, and there are many charmers in this meticulously arranged retrospective, along with a few great paintings—"Memoria in Aeternum" and "Song of the Nightingale" float to the top. But there's also a lot of well-balanced glop. Hofmann represents the beginning of the end for abstract painting, offering vision without ever being a visionary. In the long run he may be best remembered not as the mentor of Burgoyne Diller, Louise Nevelson, Alfred Jensen, and Helen Frankenthaler but as the dean of abstract painting, a teacher who transformed scores of unfocussed artists into competent ones by training them to make "good" compositions that "worked." Through Sept. 16. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—"Caribbean Festival Arts" presents costumes, masks, videotapes, music, and photographs related to the traditional celebrations of Jonkonnu, Carnival, and the Islamic Hosay. The thirty-six costume ensembles include materials such as mirrors, feathers, sequins, and beads, and range from human scale to sixteen feet tall. Starts Sept. 7. . . . ¶ Too little attention is given to installation art nowadays, but if this exhibition—the third in a series on artists working in Brooklyn—is an accurate representation, it's best left in obscurity. Much of the fifth floor of the museum has been converted into a sort of freak show, but one low on entertainment value. There are "pictures" that tell stories when you open their doors, paintings that emit music, works that light up, even a fountain that churns what looks like cherry-colored septic waste. The sometimes provocative collaborative group TODT is represented by a trite work, best described as a yucky post-industrial surgery center, complete with metal catwalks, X-rays of deformed children, and examining-room furniture that suggests torture. If you exit the show here, you will enter a display of American paintings, and face John Singer Sargent's "Portrait of Mrs. Hugh Hammersley," which depicts the kind of perfectly charmed leisure world that could very well have inspired TODT's horrific vision. The rosy-cheeked Mrs. Hammersley is poised in a red velvet gown on her satin davenport, fresh as the moment she arrived for her sitting. The artist's brush is at its most animated, with each stroke serving a purpose. For all its age and tradition the portrait is fresher than any of the installation work behind it. Through Oct. 15. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Shortly after King Leopold II of Belgium was forced to end his rampage through the inappropriately named Congo Free State—today's Zaire—this museum mounted an expedition through that vast area which employed thirty-eight thousand porters and lasted from 1909 to 1915. The travellers brought back fifty-four tons of collectibles, most notably the rare animals that continue to grace the dioramas in the Akeley Hall of African Mammals. This show is primarily made up of objects relating to the expedition and accumulated from the Mangbetu people of what is now northeastern Zaire: musical instruments with highly inventive figurative carvings; photographs of people with outrageous hats and hairdos; books such as "The Curse of Central Africa," from 1903, by Captain Guy Burrows; sculptures with Brancusiesque faces that should inspire further rethinking of the history of abstraction; and numerous pieces that display colonial references, including gourds carved with images of armed soldiers. (Open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 to 9.)

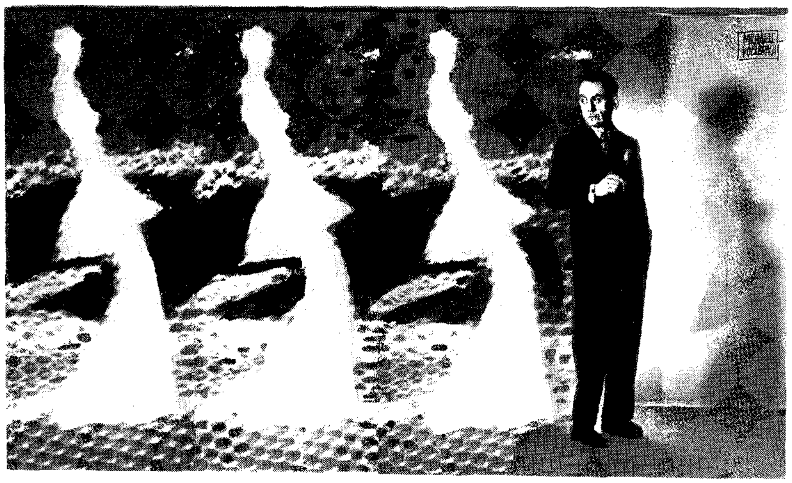
AMERICAN CRAFT MUSEUM, 40 W. 53rd St.—A retrospective of ninety-three works from the forties to the present by fibre artist Ed Rossbach. Starts Sept. 6. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—Twenty-four custom-built doghouses by contemporary architects and designers are on view in the museum's garden. There are doghouses made of bones, rawhide dog chews, and, in one case, an old television console with "Lassie Come Home" stencilled on its empty screen. Most appealing is Michael McDonough's "Dog House in the Mayan Style." A replica of La Iglesia at Chichén Itzá, it is constructed entirely from dog biscuits. Its adobe-colored walls glisten from multiple coats of marine varnish, intended to protect it from pouring rain and hungry puppies. Through Oct. 14. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from 5 to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

JEWISH MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"Why I Got Into TV and Other Stories." Ilene Segalove is a regular on the video circuit. Her taped stories, as well as her radio programs and photographic collages—the subject of this "mid-career" retrospective—are about growing up in TV land. The works define the chasm between her mother's generation of happy homemakers and her own generation, between the ideals of male art and the everyday realities of women. Her stories are delivered, as one might expect, with a heavy dose of irony. Sometimes her wives have shaken their shackles: one tape begins with the narration, "Prometheus Unbound; Gloria Unbound. I haven't worn a girdle in twenty years." But often their liberation consists of no more than overthrowing the tedium of homemade clothing starch with wash-and-wear leisure suits. There are moments of surrealistic resonance, like the videotape of a wife who declares, "I thank God every day that I was born in California," or the photograph in which the artist has erased her nipples in imitation of Barbie. But for the most part Segalove's work falls flat and remains in the shadow of Baldessari's. Through Nov. 1. . . . ¶ "A Day in the Warsaw Ghetto" is an exhibition of eighty-five photographs taken in September, 1941, by German Army sergeant Heinz Jöst. Through Nov. 1. . . . ¶ A show of ten paintings and drawings, and a contemporary interpretation of a sukkah, or improvised shelter, by the artist Eli Content. Through Nov. 1. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

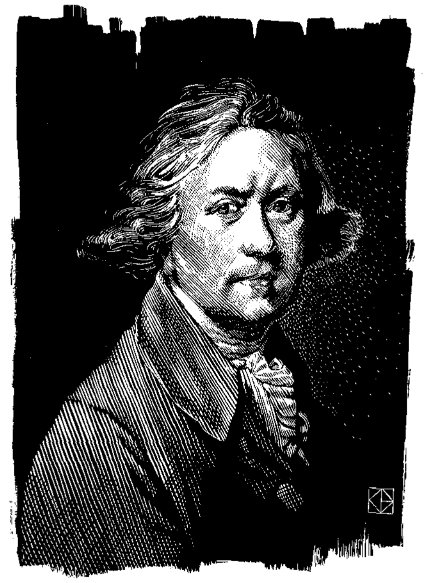
JACQUES MARCHAIS CENTER OF TIBETAN ART, 338 Lighthouse Ave., Staten Island—Jacqueline Norman Klauber was one of those great, eccentric travellers who steep themselves in a place without ever going there. Under the name Jacques Marchais, she amassed a very good collection of Tibetan art, and to house it she built a structure resembling a Tibetan mountain temple, with an acoustic-tile ceiling and rustic New York State fieldstone. It's one of New York's sweeter museums, located in a quiet hillside neighborhood on Staten Island and surrounded by a modest terraced garden. Marchais, a Midwesterner, took her Tibet seriously. "According to Buddhist law," one wall label explains, "a monk's vow can be taken when a child is old enough to scare a crow." She filled an altar and several display cases with ritualistic objects, sculptures of various deities, and portrait statues of lamas, most of it less than a few hundred years old. There is a curious collection of eleven silver implements used by the Sixth Panchen Lama to perform a fire ceremony, a set of wood purgatory guardian figures, some elaborate cups made of human skulls, and several aprons carved from human bones. Through Nov. 25. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 1 to 5.)

MUSEO DEL BARRIO, 1230 Fifth Ave., at 104th St.—In a show of works by three mid-career Puerto Rican sculptors, Melquíades Rosario, the youngest, is by far the most compelling. His sculptures—of raw and smoothed wood and, to a lesser extent, concrete and stone—are very modernistic and lyrical, somewhat in the organic spirit of Louise Bourgeois's work. Antonio Navia's delicate and precisely constructed pieces are reminiscent of intri-



Man Ray at the International Center of Photography Midtown

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN



Joseph Wright at the Met

cate ship models and electronic instruments. Also on display are several ceramic works by Jaime Suárez. Through Oct. 14. . . . ¶ "Art Underground: A Public Art Project by Nitza Tufiño:" drawings, ceramics, and two murals to be installed in the subway station at 103rd Street and Lexington Avenue this fall. The work is far less inspirational than the ceramic-tile decorations for the Broadway-and-86th-Street station that the artist did in collaboration with twelve secondary-school students. Through Sept. 16. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—The Gibson Girl did everything: she boated, she bicycled, she played tennis, she drove, she partied, and she married. Of course, all of these pursuits demanded different costumes, and Charles Dana Gibson's turn-of-the-century drawings created the kind of versatile mystique that would make Calvin Klein fall off his horse. The Gibson Girl's heyday, from 1895 to 1905, is celebrated in this show of fourteen full costumes, along with drawings, photographs, and memorabilia. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—An exhibition that reunites more than sixty of the American paintings that were displayed at the 1889 World's Fair, in Paris. Included are works by John Singer Sargent, William Merritt Chase, and James McNeill Whistler. Starts Sept. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Road, Long Island City—Noguchi (1904-88), one of the twentieth century's singular talents, designed this oasis for more than two hundred and fifty of his sculptures. It contains a wide range of his work—from the early surrealistic biomorphic sculptures to several types of stone carvings—and documentation of his prodigious public art. The centerpiece of the museum is a peaceful, ivy-walled garden dotted with the artist's works. Through Nov. 28. (Open Wednesdays and Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Michael Kidner—A latter-day Constructivist whose work is generated by systems governing algebraic permutations and the "optics of color." Kidner has a nice, plummy, boatman's or carpenter's sense of materials, particularly wood and string. "The Net (From Mies van der Rohe to Freiburg Cathedral)," a 1987 movable wall construction made of elastic, wood, hooks, and steel rings, is arguably the pièce de résistance. It suggests a platform-tennis court deconstructed by a mercurial and romantic ball boy. Here, as elsewhere, we are met with an impeccable nonobjective literalism. Through Oct. 20.

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(Center for International Contemporary Arts, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Christopher Wool—Large paintings on paper, of either a Penckian phoenix or what might be described as a black putto done in the racist style of thirties Hollywood movies. The two images are arranged in various combinations—singly, in pairs, as friezes. The paintings are cynical works about the state of originality and the role of the artist in today's art world, but they are also surprisingly penetrating and pack a hard punch. Through Sept. 12. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St.)

"Rediscovering Pompeii"—The mood of this show of recent excavations is fascinating and bizarre. Viewers in the darkened rooms of the main exhibition space are greeted by a recessed circular pit containing a "Woman from Oplontis," whose painfully contorted remains are cast in resin. Among the many gorgeous and refined objects here is the dazzling "Bronze Hand from the Cult of Sabazius." It not only rivals Donatello but serves as one of the very few overt examples of the Pompeians' focus on sex—their unabashed and very famous erotica was a cornerstone of daily life. This fact is discreetly mentioned in the exhibition, yet only Sabazius' busy hand and one Augustine phallus, it seems, were considered fit for our eyes in this age. Through Sept. 15. (I.B.M. Gallery of Science and Art, Madison Ave. at 56th St.)

Group Show—A crisp and quirky glimpse of work by four very different painters who are not necessarily what they seem. The inspired and rather maniacal Mike Bidlo, best known for his impeccably "forged" Pollocks and Picassos, is represented here by one early and one very late de Chirico—so late, in fact, that it suggests early-eighties East Village art. Jane Kaplowitz, too, is known for anxious modernist reprises, most recently seen in a 1988 show of very intelligent and offbeat cartoons, but now she has broken through to the more insouciant realm of . . . wallpaper borders! Her big painting is of a blown-up bird-with-nest repeat—delivered faithfully, in soft decorator colors—but it also seems to be a sort of reductio ad absurdum, kinda rueful and kinda sweet, on the theme of *motherhood*. I. Rice Pereira's *painting* is an abstract tossup of dippiness and acidity, geometry and wooziness—a deadpan echo of the Whitney's Hans Hofmann show. And Rob Wynne, the abstract painter who (along with Kaplowitz) organized this endearingly neurotic exhibition, is by inclination a romantic but seems to mistrust the repercussions of overt romanticism on a contemporary audience. His two snappy paintings have a bright polka-dot façade, but in their drips we may think we're seeing the tracks of their tears. These artists all play it cool and matter of fact, but something hotter and stranger lurks beneath their accomplished surfaces: they may all be closet Pagliaccis. Through Sept. 15. (McCoy, 41 E. 57th St.)

Season Openers—**LYNDA BENGLIS**, Cooper, 155 Wooster St. (through Sept. 29); **JOANNE CARSON** and **JAN HOLCOMB**, Ruth Siegel, 24 W. 57th St. (starts Sept. 6); **WILLEM DE KOONING**, Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. (through Oct. 15); **HERBERT FERBER**, Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (starts Sept. 6); **RAFAEL FERRER**, Hoffman, 429 West Broadway (starts Sept. 7); **MAURICE GOLUBOV**, De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St. (starts Sept. 5); **DOUGLAS HUEBLER** and **MICHAEL GONZALEZ**, Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, starts Sept. 6); **PATRICK IRELAND**, Cowles, 420 West Broadway (through Oct. 1); **MICHAEL KESSLER**, Tilton, 24 W. 57th St. (starts Sept. 5); **JAMES LITTLE**, Kelly, 591 Broadway (starts Sept. 8); **ANDREW MASULLO**, Fiction-Nonfiction, 21 Mercer St. (through Oct. 6); **PIETER LAURENS MOL**, Louver, 130 Prince St. (starts Sept. 8); **DAVID NELSON**, Petersburg, 130 Prince St. (starts Sept. 6); **BEVERLY PEPPER** and **BURGOYNE DILLER**, Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (starts Sept. 6); **ADRIAN PIPER**, Weber, 142 Greene St. (starts Sept. 8); **ROBERT STACKHOUSE**, Dolan Maxwell, 154 Wooster St. (starts Sept. 8); **STEPHEN TANIS**, French, 41 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, starts Sept. 5); **ROBIN WINTERS**, Alexander, 59 Wooster St. (starts Sept. 8).

OTHER VENUES

The Anchorage—The artists exhibiting this summer in New York's most dramatic space for contemporary art, the vaulted brick anchorage beneath the Brooklyn Bridge, take very seriously the various indications that our golden society is falling apart. As usual, the quality is uneven, and some things look much better than they actually are. There is an overabundance of sound installations with echoing voices and low-level, mood-evoking blue lights. (One includes the spoken text "We are the names of time. To talk is human.") But there are also some very affecting works. Jim Goldberg has constructed a full-size house of the picket-fence variety; on its exterior he has projected slides of homeless youths and their drawings, which describe in documentary detail the squalor, danger, and isolation in which they live. Nancy Rubins has erected a personal public monument, a memorial to a collaborator who died recently of AIDS. It is a massive piece that is composed of a huge dead oak tree and sixty thousand pounds of rubble from a sculpture they constructed together, most of it contained now in sealed metal cases. In a simple, stark sound show, Jerry Allyn makes such commonsense statements as "Wouldn't you love to hear Rohrabacher tell us why Courbet's rollicking, and decidedly lesbian-looking, women are glorious?," and repeatedly wonders what it would take to "get the sixty per cent we rarely hear from to write to their Senate and their Congress" in support of freedom of speech and the N.E.A. Through Oct. 7. (Cadman Plaza West at Front St., Brooklyn. Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

OASIS

Until late September, Rockefeller Center's Channel Garden (so nicknamed because it separates the British Empire Building from the Maison Française) is playing host to nearly two hundred species of succulents. More than half of these water-hoarding plants are cacti, fairly flaunting their prickly arms and spiky headdresses in a celebration of the eccentric. "If you look at plant forms around the world," David Murbach, the garden's manager, says, "cacti are among the most strangely evolved; they're truly otherworldly. Over the aeons, they've given up leaves and incorporated the water they need right into their trunks."

Succulents' names often testify to their idiosyncrasies. Echeveria Pink Frills have long stems like crooked fingers, with pink blooms delicately balanced on their tips. Living Stones are soft clusters of pebbly growths that hide nicely in gravel, periodically trumpeting their existence by pushing forth daisylike flowers. And Old Man Cactus has, over the centuries, grown a raggedy wool cap and beard. For added effect, the garden is strewn with cacti skeletons that look like braided driftwood or carved-wood pineapples. Since Murbach mounts at least a dozen exhibits a year, the job's greatest challenge is changing the garden's theme in a single day (although this one took two). Why doesn't he do it at night, when the area is clear? "I wouldn't think of it," he says. "This is horticultural theatre!"

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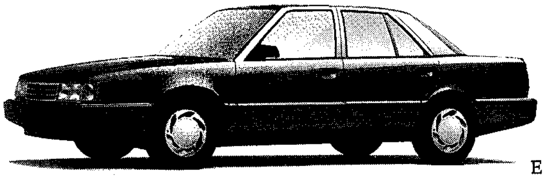

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PHOTOGRAPHY

WE hadn't even set foot in Janet Borden's gallery (560 Broadway) and the fun had already begun. We weren't quite sure how to knock on her door, because it was covered with green straw. Before we had a chance to touch it, the door opened, and Clara, a black dog with an acid-green tennis ball in her mouth, ran out while Ms. Borden, close behind, exclaimed, "One escaped!" There was so much action we didn't know what to look at first. Clara was bounding down the corridor, the ball was bouncing, and we could now see ahead of us into Ms. Borden's gallery.

This is not your everyday photo show. Like the door, the floor and the walls are covered with green straw, as are the furniture and objects that fill the room. Practically the only things that aren't green are twenty-two sculptures of dogs—and they're purple. Iridescent purple. There are Chihuahuas, cocker spaniels, basset hounds, boxers, terriers, beagles, and setters. Green dogs are also hanging around. And dead horror-movie-scale bugs get the green treatment, too.

This fabulist interior is by Sandy Skoglund, an artist who's been producing impressive installations and photographs for at least a decade. In this particular piece, titled "The Green House," photography is used in several ways. All around the room are little green straw-covered frames of the type one usually fills with family pictures. And in the back of the installation is the climax of the piece—a large photograph of a green room that's almost identical to its re-creation in this gallery. There are two people in the photograph; they're wearing bathrobes—green, of course.

Skoglund's work is like a frozen slice of unchecked imagination. She gets away with what might otherwise come off as gimmickry, because she isn't afraid of going over the top—of going all the way with an idea. In this new piece, as in her earlier work, the use of animals and repetition, as well as her switches on traditional colors, makes for a magnetic environment. Her installations are a balancing act between kookiness and incredible things made somehow plausible. We were told, for example, that earlier on, other visitors had said that their whole house was purple and white, and that maybe they could use a purple dog.

LADY CLEMENTINA HAWARDEN (1823-65)—Lady Hawarden is no longer a delicious secret, now that an exhibition of her Victorian photographs has been organized. She treats her female subjects with unparalleled grace: she wraps them with light, she reflects them in mirrors, she presents them as embodiments of soul, isolating this sense of exquisite internal life in interiors that are pregnant with aura. This is work of astounding subtlety and beauty. Through Oct. 9. (Museum of Modern Art.)

FÉLIX TEYNARD (1817-92)—The Met has mounted a passionate show of thirty-five primarily architectural views of Egypt taken from 1851 to 1852 by this French civil engineer. At the time, each photograph was still an almost miraculous event, and in these pictures you can feel how everything counted, how nothing about the process was taken for granted. The salted paper Teynard used has a marvellous delicacy compared with today's slicker, thicker papers, and it contributes to the over-all sense of awe and achievement. An ironic feature of this show is the inclusion of Teynard's photo of the Temple of Dendur—the very same monument that is now on view in the Museum's Sackler wing. Through Sept. 9. (Metropolitan Museum.)

EDWARD WESTON (1886-1953) / **ARNOLD EAGLE**—*The quality of the prints in this show is* superb, and their scale is a lesson in modesty. Made up of portraits and nudes taken by Weston from 1914 to 1945, this abundant show gives us a chance to absorb the work of a photographer who knew how to use the camera in the service of intimacy. We were ready to be impressed by this aspect of Weston's photography because he has always exemplified the absence of prurience—an absence most obvious in his nudes, which are powerfully sensual, yet never commercial. What we didn't expect, though, is the social commentary and dry wit that are so apparent in his later, less gorgeous work. There's a photograph, for instance, in which a nude is "dressed" by a leaf—it's an image that seems to be commenting on the culture's fear of nakedness; a picture that continues to resound, forty-five years after it was made, in today's climate of censorship. / Sixty black-and-white prints from the thirties and forties of New York's tenements and elevated subways and the people within them. Through Sept. 9. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

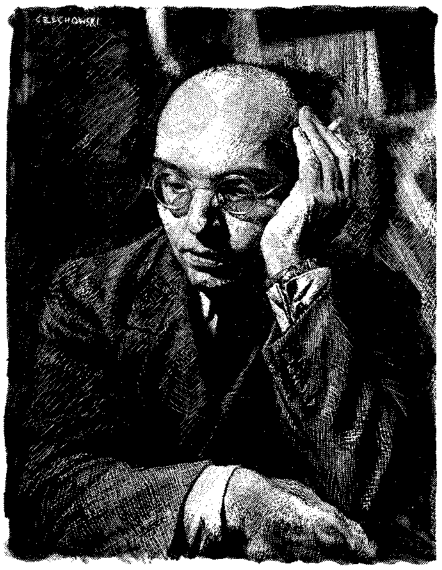
SEASON OPENERS—**EVERGON,** Shainman, 560 Broadway (starts Sept. 8); **CANDIDA HOFER,** Klagsbrun, 51 Greene St. (starts Sept. 6); **JOEL MEYEROWITZ,** Danziger, 415 West Broadway (starts Sept. 8); **RICHARD PARE,** Sikkema, 155 Spring St. (through Sept. 22); **STEPHEN JOHN PHILLIPS,** Fendrick, 568 Broadway, entrance on Prince St. (starts Sept. 5); **MAN RAY,** International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. (daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8, starts Sept. 7); **SANDY SKOGLUND,** Borden, 560 Broadway (through Sept. 29); **KENNETH SNELSON,** Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through Oct. 6).

MUSIC

OPERA buffs and TV-nostalgia buffs all over town are glued to their sets watching "The Voice of Firestone," a series that will never be rerun along with "The Honeymooners" or "I Love Lucy." These were the days when you could be assured you were making the right choice in tire and tubing products because they came associated with the tony world of opera, and in the same program be assured that you were up to handling the tony world of opera because it came diluted with the familiar, vacuous, and tacky trappings of early entertainment TV.

The Firestone family left all the original reels of the series to the New England Conservatory, and now some of the choicest programs are being released on the home-video market by Video Artists International (P.O. Box 153, Ansonia Station, NY, NY, 10023). The programs date from 1949 to 1963; the singers include Lauritz Melchior, Risë Stevens, Licia Albanese, Jussi Bjoerling, Leonard Warren, and others of their calibre; the repertory combines extremely well-known opera arias with aggressively accessible ballads and popular songs. You can see poor Eleanor Steber taking big, hefty opera-size breaths and emitting big, healthy opera-size notes as some mild-looking gent pretending to be her dancing partner, or beau, or something, tags along attached by the nose to her cheek. Or poor Bidú Sayão singing (in Italian) about how she would like to give her sweetheart a kiss, while she gamely glides around a studio set surprising and tut-tutting couples who are similarly disposed. No great amount of thought, clearly, went into the scenarios that were draped around these songs and arias.

But sometimes, mercifully, the singers are allowed to stand there and sing, and (to put it simply) they can. Even in the most contrived segments, it is fascinating to have close visual contact with vocalists so capable and well endowed, and so full of apparent belief in the power of song and the worth of their material. This is something that "Live from the Met," though infinitely more serious in artistic outlook and accomplished in realization, rarely offers. Our own experience with the Firestone series was that we spent much of the time amused, annoyed, and infuriated, and that right in the midst of one of those feelings we would notice the tears in our eyes.



Kurt Weill, composer of "Street Scene"

NEW YORK CITY OPERA—**CARMEN,** with Susanne Marsee, Stephanie Friede, Fabio Armiliato, and Dean Peterson; conducted by Joseph Colaneri. (Sept. 4 at 8 and Sept. 9 at 2.) . . . **FROM THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD,** in English (with supertitles), with John Absalom, Jon Garrison, Eugene Perry, Harlan Foss, and John Lankston; Christopher Keene. (Sept. 5 at 8 and Sept. 8 at 8.) . . . **STREET SCENE,** a revival of Kurt Weill's 1947 classic, with Langston Hughes' lyrics based on Elmer Rice's Pulitzer Prize-winning tragedy depicting New York tenement life. The large cast includes Margaret Cusack, Sheryl Woods, Rachel Rosales, Joyce Castle, Susanne Marsee, Kevin Anderson, and William Parcher; Chris Nance. (Sept. 7 at 8 and Sept. 12 at 8.) . . . **TOSCA,** With Edith Davis, Stefano Algieri, and Harry Dworchak; Louis Salemno (Sept. 8 at 2.) . . . With Martha Thigpen, Antonio Barasorda, and Donnie Ray Albert; Louis Salemno. (Sept. 11 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—A pre-season concert of Stravinsky and Gershwin, including excerpts from "Porgy and Bess," with soloists Roberta Alexander and Gregg Baker; Zubin Mehta conducts. (Sept. 6 at 8.) . . . ¶ The season's opening night is Maestro Mehta's thousandth concert with the Philharmonic. The program features orchestral music by

Mozart and Tchaikovsky, Bloch's "Schelomo," and Tchaikovsky's "Variations on a Rococo Theme," with cellist Mstislav Rostropovich. (Sept. 12 at 7.) (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424.)

BARGEMUSIC—Pianist Christopher O'Riley plays Mozart, a string trio performs Beethoven, and all join forces for Brahms' G-Minor Piano Quartet. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Sept. 6 at 7:30 and Sept. 9 at 4.)

BLACK MUSIC REPERTORY ENSEMBLE—A vocal/instrumental ensemble sponsored by Chicago's Center for Black Music Research performs music by notable black composers from the nineteenth century to the present, ranging from Will Marion Cook and James Reese Europe to Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake. Since 1983, the Center has collected black-related jazz, blues, gospel, opera, and concert works, and has promoted them through publications, conferences, and performances by the thirteen-member ensemble. The concert boasts several New York premières, including Sidney Lambert's "Rescue Polka Mazurka" (1869) and Montague Ring's "Three African Dances" (1913). Kay George Roberts conducts, and Hilda Harris, William Brown, and Donnie Ray Albert are featured as vocal soloists. (Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911. Sept. 10 at 8.)

"WORKS AND PROCESS"—A discussion/performance, sponsored by the Guggenheim Museum, of City Opera's upcoming production of Schoenberg's opera "Moses und Aron." (Society for Ethical Culture, 2 W. 64th St. 360-3503. Sept. 11-12 at 8.)

AUDUBON STRING QUARTET—With pianist Lev Natochenny (gold-medal laureate of the Busoni International Competition) performing quintets by Shostakovitch and Schnittke. (Bösendorfer Center, 406 E. 79th St. Sept. 12 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

MUSIC TODAY—Rhonda Kess directs new music-theatre works by Harrison Birtwistle, William Albright, and György Ligeti. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Sept. 12 at 8.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK
PERSONAL APPEARANCES

BRUCE HORNSBY AND THE RANGE—Bruce Hornsby is a VH-1 kind of guy—he plays mid-tempo, mid-life, middle-of-the-road, middle-of-the-eighties rock. His signature sound is based on the molasses-thick Virginia drawl with which he sings his socially conscious songs. (Hornsby was given the Grammy for Best New Artist of 1986 on the strength of his mellow denunciation of racism, "The Way It Is," which was a huge hit.) You never know where he's going to pop up, Zelig-like, next; later this month, he'll be temporarily playing keyboards with the Grateful Dead. As a rocker, he's no Jerry Lee Lewis, but Hornsby and his band have developed into an accomplished arena act, and some of his songs are a lot finer than his formula. With Cowboy Junkies. (Pier 84, Twelfth Ave. at 43rd St. Sept. 12 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 247-4777.)

KENNY G AND MICHAEL BOLTON—Jones Beach Theatre. 1-516 221-1000. Sept. 3 at 8.

ECLECTIX!—With Dick Hyman and others. (CAMI Hall, 165 W. 57th St. Sept. 7 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

NEW AMERICAN ORCHESTRA—With Diane Schuur and David Benoit. (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424. Sept. 8 at 8.)

JAMES TAYLOR—Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 422-9222. Sept. 12 at 8.

PIER 84—Sept. 7-8: Kenny G and Michael Bolton. . . . ¶ Sept. 9: Steel Pulse, with Pato Banton and others. (Twelfth Ave. at 43rd St. Evenings at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 247-4777.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

METS—Vs. the St. Louis Cardinals, Sept. 10-11 at 7:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the Pittsburgh Pirates, Sept. 12-13 at 7:35.

YANKEES—Vs. the California Angels, Sept. 3 at 4 and Sept. 5-6 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Oakland A's, Sept. 7-8 at 7:30 and Sept. 9 at 1:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Texas Rangers, Sept. 10-12 at 7:30.

GIANTS—Vs. the Philadelphia Eagles, in the season opener, Sept. 9 at 8.

(Home base for the Mets is Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499; for the Yankees, Yankee Stadium, 293-6000; and for the Giants, Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands, 1-201 935-8111.)

RACING

HORSES—At Belmont: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. The Jerome Handicap is Sept. 3 and the Flower Bowl is Sept. 9. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30. . . . **TROTTING** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8, and Tuesdays at 1.

CHAMPIONSHIPS—TENNIS

U.S. OPEN—Edberg, these days the most consistent and likable near-great, blew it in the first round. McEnroe, the most inconsistent and unlikable living legend, is playing strong in his own back yard. And Graf—once invincible, now mortal—could be capsized before the quarter-finals by the darling, determined Capriati. All in all, the infuriating (airplanes have been rerouted this year) and elusive (Borg never won) Open is still the most unpredictable two weeks in tennis. U.S.T.A. National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadow. 1-718 271-5100. Sept. 3 and 7-8 at 11, Sept. 4-6 at 11 and 7:30, and Sept. 9 at noon.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

ELLIS ISLAND—The island itself, where millions of immigrants landed between 1892 and 1954, is actually twenty-four acres of landfill—refuse created when the subway system was built. Within the main Beaux-Arts-style building, which opened in 1900 and is a hundred and sixty feet long, is the Registry Room, the site where inspectors decided whether to invite the newcomers to stay or to send them back home. The building has recently benefitted from a hundred-and-fifty-six-million-dollar restoration and will be open to the public, starting Sept. 10. Among the other sights visitors will encounter are antique luggage in the Baggage Room and narrow iron cots in a dormitory space. Call 363-3203 for more information.

QUEENS ETHNIC MUSIC AND DANCE FESTIVAL—Thirteen hours of multicultural carousing with Greek, Irish, Jewish, Italian, Colombian, Puerto Rican, Yugoslavian, and Caribbean performers. (Bohemian Hall and Park, 29-19 24th Ave., Queens. Sept. 8, starting at 11 A.M. For more information, call 691-9510.)

VIEWPOINT—A visitor may feel like a small insect while touring this exhibition of paintings and sculptures on botanical subjects by mostly local artists: some of the sculptures of plants are nearly eight feet tall. Steinhardt Conservatory, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave. Daily, except Mondays, 10 to 5. Through Oct. 7.

WALKS—On Sept. 8 at 11:45, Steve Brill, a naturalist known to his friends as Wildman, will lead a tour of the edible plants that grow in Central Park. For reservations, call 1-718 291-6825. . . . ¶ On Sept. 9 at noon, the Lower East Side Tenement Museum starts its fall season of tours with the "Peddler's Pack Walking Tour," which recalls the lives of an actual immigrant family. Meets at the Museum, 97 Orchard St., at Delancey S . (431-0233.)

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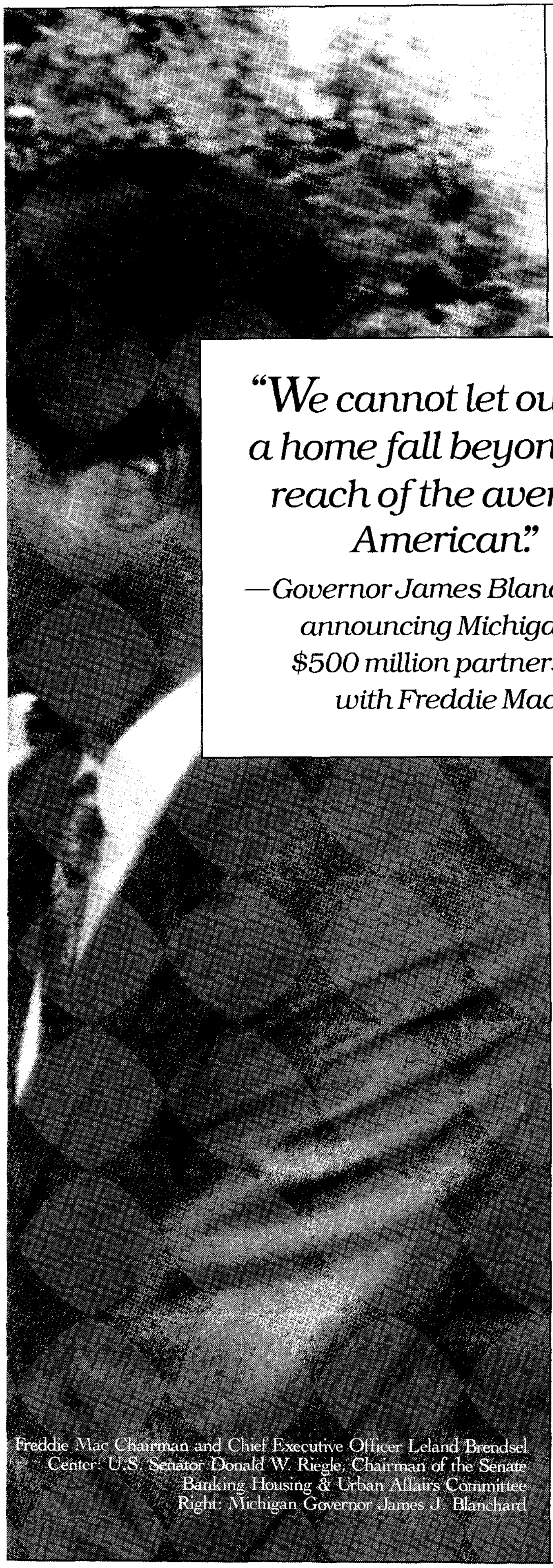

Freddie Mac Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Leland Brendsel
Center: U.S. Senator Donald W. Riegle, Chairman of the Senate
Banking Housing & Urban Affairs Committee
Right: Michigan Governor James J. Blanchard

> *"We cannot let owning a home fall beyond the reach of the average American."*
>
> *—Governor James Blanchard, announcing Michigan's $500 million partnership with Freddie Mac.*

The Michigan Initiative, developed by Freddie Mac in partnership with the state of Michigan, will help to finance homes for as many as 10,000 working families.

The plan offers 30-year, fixed-rate, single-family mortgages to eligible buyers through participating lenders statewide. By modifying underwriting and servicing guidelines, providing homebuyer education and counseling, sharing credit risk, and involving community groups, the plan will allow individuals to have access to financing that would normally be out of reach.

The Michigan Initiative reaffirms Freddie Mac's commitment to low- and moderate-income homebuyers. It will assist lenders in meeting state and federal Community Reinvestment Act requirements, and should become a blueprint for other states to follow.

"Combining Freddie Mac's prudent business practices with this creative and efficient approach to our country's housing problems makes everyone a winner—lenders, borrowers, communities and ultimately, the entire economy," said Freddie Mac Chairman Leland Brendsel. "That's why Freddie Mac is encouraging other state governments to work with us to develop similar programs. It's our continued commitment to homeownership."

For more information, call our new Affordable Housing Initiatives Department at 703-759-8806.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

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	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 28.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "The Two Jakes" (†).
Theatre 2: "After Dark, My Sweet" (directed by James Foley), with Jason Patric, Rachel Ward, and Bruce Dern.
Theatre 3: "The Unbelievable Truth" (Hal Hartley), with Robert Burke, Adrienne Shelly, and Christopher Cooke.
Theatre 4: "Pump Up the Volume" (Allan Moyle), with Christian Slater, Samantha Mathis, Scott Paulin, Ellen Greene, Mimi Kennedy, and Annie Ross.
Theatre 5: "Wild at Heart" (†).
Theatre 6: "Wild at Heart" (†).

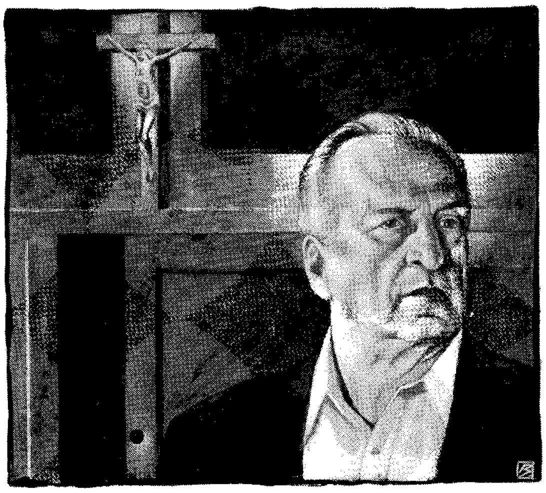
Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"Red Desert" (1964, Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian), with Monica Vitti and Richard Harris.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "The Freshman" (†).
Theatre 2: "Presumed Innocent" (†).
Theatre 3: "My Blue Heaven" (Herbert Ross), with Steve Martin, Rick Moranis, and Joan Cusack.

Bijou Cinema, 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
"Mo' Better Blues" (†).

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "The Freshman" (†).
Theatre 2: "Air America" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Mel Gibson and Robert Downey, Jr.
Theatre 3: "Ghost" (†).
Theatre 4: "Presumed Innocent" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Two Jakes" (†).
Theatre 6: "Delta Force 2" (Aaron Norris), with Chuck Norris.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"The Unbelievable Truth" (Hal Hartley), with Robert Burke, Adrienne Shelly, and Christopher Cooke.



George C. Scott in "The Exorcist III"

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"The Exorcist III" (William Peter Blatty), with George C. Scott, Ed Flanders, Brad Dourif, Jason Miller, Nicol Williamson, and Scott Wilson.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Ghost" (†).
Theatre 2: "Pump Up the Volume" (Allan Moyle), with Christian Slater.
Theatre 3: "The Lemon Sisters" (Joyce Chopra), with Diane Keaton, Carol Kane, and Kathryn Grody.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Presumed Innocent" (†).

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"The Witches" (†).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "My Blue Heaven" (Herbert Ross), with Steve Martin, Rick Moranis, and Joan Cusack.
Theatre 2: "Men at Work" (Emilio Estevez), with Charlie Sheen and Estevez.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"The Sound of Music" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"After Dark, My Sweet" (James Foley), with Jason Patric, Rachel Ward, and Bruce Dern.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Die Hard 2" (Renny Harlin), with Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia, William Sadler, John Amos, Dennis Franz, and Fred Dalton Thompson.
Theatre 2: "Darkman" (†).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Flatliners" (Joel Schumacher), with Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Kevin Bacon, William Baldwin, and Oliver Platt.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Mo' Better Blues" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Lemon Sisters" (Joyce Chopra), with Diane Keaton, Carol Kane, and Kathryn Grody.

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Presumed Innocent" (†).
Theatre 2: "Taking Care of Business" (Arthur Hiller), with James Belushi, Charles Grodin, Anne DeSalvo, and Mako.
Theatre 3: "Bye Bye Blues" (Anne Wheeler), with Rebecca Jenkins, Luke Reilly, Robyn Stevan, Michael Ontkean, and Kate Reid.

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Air America" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Mel Gibson and Robert Downey, Jr.
Theatre 2: "The Freshman" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
Through Sept. 11: "Wild at Heart" (†).
From Sept. 12: "Postcards from the Edge" (Mike Nichols), with Meryl Streep, Shirley MacLaine, Dennis Quaid, Gene Hackman, and Richard Dreyfuss.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "The Two Jakes" (†).
Theatre 2: "Pump Up the Volume" (Allan Moyle), with Christian Slater, Samantha Mathis, Scott Paulin, Ellen Greene, Mimi Kennedy, and Annie Ross.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Presumed Innocent" (†).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Ghost" (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"The Lemon Sisters" (Joyce Chopra), with Diane Keaton, Carol Kane, and Kathryn Grody.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Darkman" (†).
Theatre 2: "Flatliners" (Joel Schumacher), with Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Kevin Bacon, William Baldwin, and Oliver Platt.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "My Blue Heaven" (Herbert Ross), with Steve Martin, Rick Moranis, and Joan Cusack.
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "Ducktales, The Movie: Treasure of the Lost Lamp" (Bob Hathcock), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Mo' Better Blues" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: From Sept. 5: "The Camp at Thiaroye" (1988, directed by Ousmane Sembene and Thierno Faty Sow; in French).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: From Sept. 6: "Solaris" (1976, Andrei Tarkovsky; in Russian).

Bleecker Street Cinema 1 and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 6: "Fun Down There" (Roger Stigliano), with Michael Waite. From Sept. 7: Theatre closed.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 6: (Separate admissions) "Ariel" (†); and "Jesus of Montreal" (Denys Arcand; in French), with Lothaire Bluteau. From Sept. 7: Theatre closed.

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Flatliners" (Joel Schumacher), with Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Kevin Bacon, William Baldwin, and Oliver Platt.
Theatre 2: "Darkman" (†).

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"The Witches" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "The Lemon Sisters" (Joyce Chopra), with Diane Keaton, Carol Kane, and Kathryn Grody.
Theatre 2: "Ghost" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Mo' Better Blues" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (†).
Theatre 3: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret and Salvatore Cascio.
Theatre 4: "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" (†).

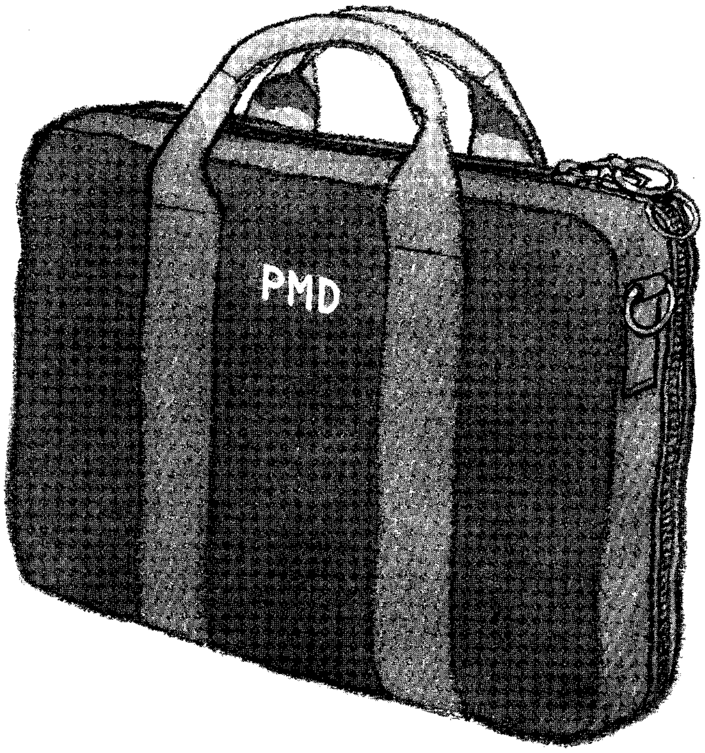
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "After Dark, My Sweet" (James Foley), with Jason Patric, Rachel Ward, and Bruce Dern.
Theatre 2: "The Exorcist III" (William Peter Blatty), with George C. Scott, Ed Flanders, Brad Dourif, Jason Miller, Nicol Williamson, and Scott Wilson.
Theatre 3: "Mo' Better Blues" (†).
Theatre 4: Through Sept. 11: "My Blue Heaven" (Herbert Ross), with Steve Martin, Rick Moranis, and Joan Cusack. From Sept. 12: "Postcards from the Edge" (Mike Nichols), with Meryl Streep, Shirley MacLaine, Dennis Quaid, Gene Hackman, and Richard Dreyfuss.
Theatre 5: "Flatliners" (Joel Schumacher), with Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Kevin Bacon, William Baldwin, and Oliver Platt.
Theatre 6: "Life Is Cheap . . . But Toilet Paper Is Expensive" (Wayne Wang).
Theatre 7: "The Lemon Sisters" (Joyce Chopra), with Diane Keaton, Carol Kane, and Kathryn Grody.
Theatre 8: "Wild at Heart" (†).
Theatre 9: "Darkman" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: (Separate admissions) "Die Hard 2" (Renny Harlin), with Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia, William Sadler, John Amos, Dennis Franz, and Fred Dalton Thompson; and "Pump Up the Volume" (Allan Moyle), with Christian Slater, Samantha Mathis, Scott Paulin, Ellen Greene, Mimi Kennedy, and Annie Ross.
Theatre 2: "Men at Work" (Emilio Estevez), with Charlie Sheen and Estevez.
Theatre 3: "The Witches" (†).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Ducktales, The Movie: Treasure of the Lost Lamp" (Bob Hathcock), an animated film.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "The Two Jakes" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Exorcist III" (William Peter Blatty), with George C. Scott, Ed Flanders, Brad Dourif, Jason Miller, Nicol Williamson, and Scott Wilson.
Theatre 3: "The Freshman" (†).
Theatre 4: "Wild at Heart" (†).
Theatre 5: "Darkman" (†).
Theatre 6: "After Dark, My Sweet" (James Foley), with Jason Patric, Rachel Ward, and Bruce Dern.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
Through Sept. 11: "Flatliners" (Joel Schumacher), with Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Kevin Bacon, William Baldwin, and Oliver Platt.
From Sept. 12: "Postcards from the Edge" (Mike Nichols), with Meryl Streep, Shirley MacLaine, Dennis Quaid, Gene Hackman, and Richard Dreyfuss.



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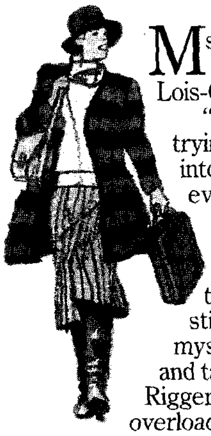

Ms. Patrice Dermody, Media Director at Lois-GGK, explains it this way: "I constantly find myself trying to jam more things into an attaché than it was ever meant to hold. Office shoes, bills, lunch, you name it. That kind of treatment would break the back of my beautiful stiff-backed case, so I find myself leaving it at home, and taking my canvas Square Rigger to work. It swallows overloads without complaint, and has inside pockets for my calculator, even a snap hook for keys."

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In nineties movies such as "Flatliners" and "Ghost"—fantasies that ache to be moral and reassuring—death allows spirits to confront and solve the problems that haunted them in life. In "Orpheus," Jean Cocteau's superb modern version of the Greek myth (playing September 6 at Theatre 80 St. Marks), death isn't so easy. The inscrutable administrators and envoys of the afterlife, including the slim, severe Princess (played by Maria Casarès), follow their own rules. That's what makes the netherworld attractive to the poet Orphée (Jean Marais), who seeks a fresh source of inspiration. The attraction is mutual: the Princess, who is destined to be the Death of Orphée, develops a crush on the poet, going so far as to kill his wife, Eurydice (Marie Déa). The movie is about how the Princess's right-hand man, Heurtebise (François Périer), and the Death-smitten Orphée enter "the Zone" that exists on the other side of mirrors and try to restore Eurydice to life.

The movie has an eerie seamlessness: emotionally and visually it's a modulated, lyrical tremble. Mounting the film in 1949 (twenty-three years after the première of his stage play), Cocteau joined his own romantic melancholy to the dislocations of the time. Francis Steegmuller, in his biography of Cocteau, lists the film's late-forties ingredients, from the post-Liberation tribunals echoed in the Zone to the motorcycle policemen Cocteau saw as Death's special agents and the "proto-beatniks" he transformed into bacchantes. The enveloping magic of Cocteau's work is in many ways beyond explication. He manages both to explore and to preserve the mysteries of mortality. He makes you believe in a twilight world where Death can face a fate worse than itself.

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)

"The Witches" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)

"Akira Kurosawa's Dreams" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)

"Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" (†).

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)

"The Unbelievable Truth" (Hal Hartley), with Robert Burke, Adrienne Shelly, and Christopher Cooke.

Loews Fine Arts (formerly the Paris), 4 W. 58th. (980-5656).

"Metropolitan" (Whit Stillman), with Edward Clements, Carolyn Farina, Christopher Eigeman, and Taylor Nichols.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)

"The Exorcist III" (William Peter Blatty), with George C. Scott and Ed Flanders.

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)

"Ghost" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)

"Wild at Heart" (†).

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)

Theatre 1: "The Icicle Thief" (Maurizio Nichetti; in Italian), with Nichetti.

Theatre 2: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret and Salvatore Cascio.

Theatre 3: "May Fools" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

"Darkman" (†).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: "The Lemon Sisters" (Joyce Chopra), with Diane Keaton, Carol Kane, and Kathryn Grody.

Theatre 2: "My Blue Heaven" (Herbert Ross), with Steve Martin, Rick Moranis, and Joan Cusack.

Theatre 3: "Taking Care of Business" (Arthur Hiller), with James Belushi, Charles Grodin, Anne DeSalvo, and Mako.

Theatre 4: "The Freshman" (†).

Theatre 5: "Presumed Innocent" (†).

Theatre 6: "Pump Up the Volume" (Allan Moyle), with Christian Slater, Samantha Mathis, Scott Paulin, Ellen Greene, Mimi Kennedy, and Annie Ross.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: "Mo' Better Blues" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Witches" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: "The Exorcist III" (William Peter Blatty), with George C. Scott, Ed Flanders, Brad Dourif, Jason Miller, Nicol Williamson, and Scott Wilson.

Theatre 2: "Flatliners" (Joel Schumacher), with Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Kevin Bacon, William Baldwin, and Oliver Platt.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: Through Sept. 6: "Problem Child" (directed by Dennis Dugan), with John Ritter. From Sept. 7: "Def by Temptation" (James Bond III), with Kadeem Hardison.

Theatre 2: "Mo' Better Blues" (†).

Theatre 3: "Total Recall" (†).

Theatre 4: "Die Hard 2" (Renny Harlin), with Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia, William Sadler, John Amos, Dennis Franz, and Fred Dalton Thompson.

Theatre 5: "Presumed Innocent" (†).

Theatre 6: "Men at Work" (Emilio Estevez), with Charlie Sheen and Estevez.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)

"Taking Care of Business" (Authur Hiller), with James Belushi, Charles Grodin, Anne DeSalvo, and Mako.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 1: "Arachnophobia" (†).

Theatre 2: "Delta Force 2" (Aaron Norris), with Chuck Norris.

Theatre 3: "Delta Force 2."

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

"The Lemon Sisters" (Joyce Chopra), with Diane Keaton, Carol Kane, and Kathryn Grody.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: "The Exorcist III" (William Peter Blatty), with George C. Scott, Ed Flanders, Brad Dourif, Jason Miller, Nicol Williamson, and Scott Wilson.

Theatre 2: "Darkman" (†).

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)

Theatre 1: "My Blue Heaven" (Herbert Ross), with Steve Martin, Rick Moranis, and Joan Cusack.

Theatre 2: "The Witches" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)

Sept. 3: "The Wizard of Oz" (1939, directed by Victor Fleming), with Judy Garland, Bert Lahr, Frank Morgan, Ray Bolger, and Jack Haley; and "Girl Crazy" (1943, Norman Taurog), with Garland, Mickey Rooney, June Allyson, and Nancy Walker.

Sept. 4-5: "Rosalie" (1938, W. S. Van Dyke), with Eleanor Powell, Nelson Eddy, and Ray Bolger; and "Dixiana" (1930, Luther Reed), with Bebe Daniels, Everett Marshall, Bert Wheeler, and Robert Woolsey.

Sept. 6-8: "The Sky's the Limit" (†); and "Top Hat" (1935, Mark Sandrich), with Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire.

Sept. 9-10: "Alexander's Ragtime Band" (†); and "Song of the Islands" (1942, Walter Lang), with Betty Grable, Victor Mature, Thomas Mitchell, and Jack Oakie.

Sept. 11-12: "Viva Las Vegas" (1964, George Sidney), with Elvis Presley, Ann-Margret, Cesare Danova, and William Demarest; and "The Girl Most Likely" (1958, Mitchell Leisen), with Jane Powell, Cliff Robertson, Keith Andes, and Tommy Noonan.

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

From Sept. 7: (Separate admissions) "Sullivan's Travels" (†); "The Miracle of Morgan's Creek" (1944, Preston Sturges), with Bette Hutton and Eddie Bracken; and "Preston Sturges: Rise and Fall of an American Dreamer" (1990, Ken Bowser), a documentary.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Sept. 3: "Juliet of the Spirits" (1965, Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Giulietta Masina; and "Il Bidone" (1955, Fellini; in Italian), with Broderick Crawford, Masina, Richard Basehart, and Franco Fabrizi.

Sept. 4: "Portrait of Jennie" (1949, William Dieterle), with Jennifer Jones and Joseph Cotten; and "Duel in the Sun" (1946, King Vidor), with Jones, Gregory Peck, Cotten, Charles Bickford, and Lillian Gish.

Sept. 5: "I Could Go On Singing" (1963, Ronald Neame), with Judy Garland, Dirk Bogarde, and Jack Klugman; and "The Star" (1953, Stuart Heisler), with Bette Davis, Sterling Hayden, and Natalie Wood.

Sept. 6: "Testament of Orpheus" (1962, Jean Cocteau; in French); "The Blood of a Poet" (1930, Cocteau; in French); and "Orpheus" (see blurb at left).

Sept. 7-8: "Double Indemnity" (1944, Billy Wilder), with Barbara Stanwyck, Fred MacMurray, and Edward G. Robinson; and "Sorry, Wrong Number" (1948, Anatole Litvak), with Stanwyck and Burt Lancaster.

Sept. 9: "Last Tango in Paris" (†) and "The Men" (†).

Sept. 10: "The Spiders" (1919, Fritz Lang; a German silent film); and "Spies" (1929, Lang; a German silent film).

Sept. 11: "Mother Wore Tights" (1947, Walter Lang), with Betty Grable, Dan Dailey, Mona Freeman, and William Frawley; and "I Wake Up Screaming" (1942, H. Bruce Humberstone), with Grable, Victor Mature, Carole Landis, and Laird Cregar.

Sept. 12: "Gunfight at the O.K. Corral" (1957, John Sturges), with Burt Lancaster, Kirk Douglas, Rhonda Fleming, and John Ireland; and "The Gunfighter" (1950, Henry King), with Gregory Peck.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—Sept. 3 at noon: "Wild in the Country" (1961, directed by Philip Dunne), with Elvis Presley, Hope Lange, and Tuesday Weld. . . . ¶ Sept. 3 at 2:30: "The Hustler" (1961, Robert Rossen), with Paul Newman, Jackie Gleason, Piper Laurie, and George C. Scott. . . . ¶ Sept. 3 at 6: "Wild River" (1960, Elia Kazan), with Montgomery Clift, Lee Remick, and Jo Van Fleet. . . . ¶ Sept. 4 at 3: "Zorba the Greek" (1964, Michael Cacoyannis), with Anthony Quinn, Alan Bates, and Irene Papas. . . . ¶ Sept. 4 at 6: "Wild in the Country." . . . ¶ Sept. 6 at noon: "Hush . . . Hush, Sweet Charlotte" (†). . . . ¶ Sept. 6 at 4: "Cleopatra" (1963, Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, and Rex Harrison. . . . ¶ Sept. 7 at 3: "The Hustler." . . . ¶ Sept. 7 at 6: "Zorba the Greek." . . . ¶ Sept. 8 at noon: "A High Wind in Jamaica" (1965, Alexander Mackendrick), with Anthony Quinn, James Coburn, and Lila Kedrova. . . . ¶ Sept. 8 at 3: "Cleopatra." . . . ¶ Sept. 9 at noon: "The Sound of Music" (†). . . . ¶ Sept. 9 at 5: "Hush . . . Hush, Sweet Charlotte" (†). . . . ¶ Sept. 10 at 3: "Two for the Road" (†). . . . ¶ Sept. 10 at 6: "The Sound of Music" (†). . . . ¶ Sept. 11 at 3: "A High Wind in Jamaica." . . . ¶ Sept. 11 at 6: "Two for the Road" (†).

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"MB Playhouse," dramas shown on television over the past thirty years. Sept. 4-8: Jeremy Sandford's "Cathy Come Home" (1966, Ken Loach), with Carol White. . . . From Sept. 11: Edith Wharton's "Ethan Frome" (1960, CBS), with Julie Harris. Showings Tuesdays at 3 and 6, Wednesdays through Fridays at 3, and Saturdays at 1. . . . ¶ "The Reiner Moritz Collection." Sept. 4-8: "The Story of Fashion: Remembrance of Things Past" (1987, Eila Hershon and Roberto Guerra), a survey of twentieth-century fashion. Showings Tuesday at 2 and 6:30 and Wednesday through Saturday at 2. . . . Sept. 4-8: "Chanel, Chanel" (1986, Hershon and Guerra), a documentary. Showings Tuesday through Saturday at 3:15. . . . From Sept. 11: "Bruce Chatwin" (1982, Nigel Wattis), a documentary. Showings Tuesday at 2 and 6:30 and Wednesday through Saturday at 2. . . . From Sept. 11: "The Spirit of Music" (1988, Jeremy Marre), which shows the trumba dance ceremonies of Madagascar and traces the roots of the samba. Showings Tuesday through Saturday at 3:15.

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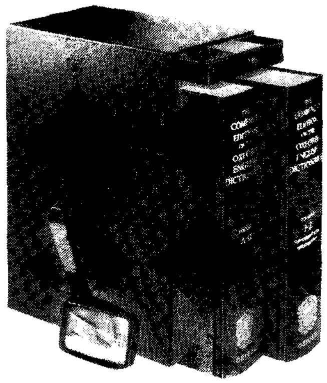

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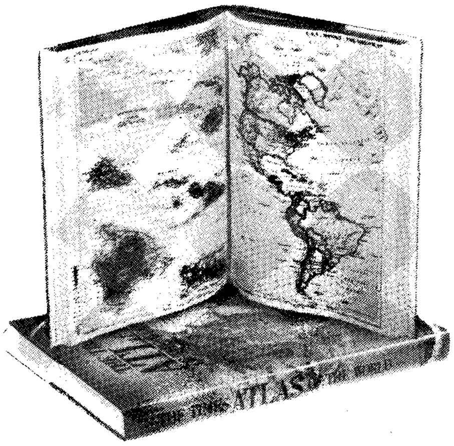

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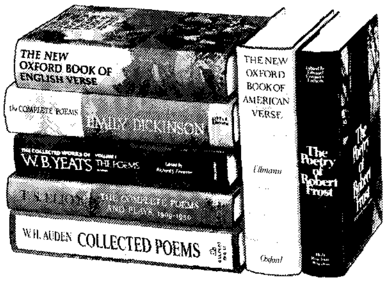
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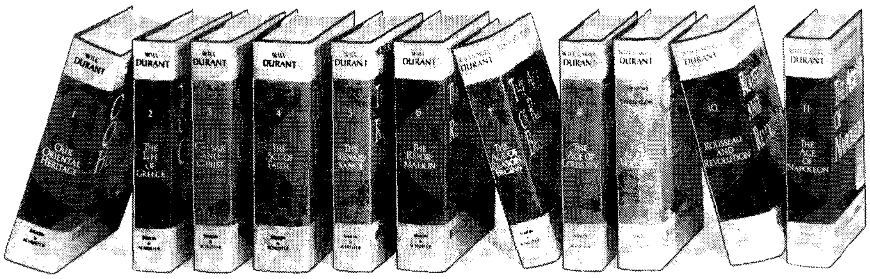

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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building, 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—Sept. 7 at 1: "House Party" (1990, Reginald Hudlin), with Christopher Reid and Robin Harris; "I'm Gonna Git You Sucka" (1988, Keenen Ivory Wayans), with Jim Brown, Isaac Hayes, Antonio Fargas, Bernie Casey, and Wayans; "Ida B. Wells" (1989, William Greaves); and "Black Power in America: Myth or Reality" (1989, Greaves). . . . ¶ Sept. 7 at 7:30: "House Party"; and a new film by Min. Clemson Brown. . . . ¶ Sept. 8 at 11:30: "Seriously Fresh" (1989, Jamal Joseph); "Crackdown" (1989, Ron Carpenter); "Making 'Do the Right Thing'" (1989, St. Claire Bourne), a documentary; and "Do the Right Thing" (1989, Spike Lee), with Ossie Davis, Danny Aiello, Bill Nunn, Giancarlo Esposito, Ruby Dee, and Lee. . . . ¶ Sept. 8 at 5: "Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads" (1983, Spike Lee); "Drop Squard: The Session" (1989, Butch Robinson, Eric Payne, and David Johnson); "Unspoken Conversations" (1989, Iman U. Hameen); and "She's Gotta Have It" (1986, Spike Lee), with Tracy Camilia John, Tommie Hicks, John Canada Terrell, Raye Dowell, and Lee. . . . ¶ Sept. 8 at 9:30: "Glory" (1989, Edward Zwick), with Denzel Washington, Morgan Freeman, and Matthew Broderick. . . . ¶ Sept. 9 at noon: "Glory"; and "Frederick Douglass: An American Life" (1989, William Greaves). . . . ¶ Sept. 9 at 5: "Do the Right Thing." . . . ¶ Sept. 9 at 8:30: "Glory."

Anthology Film Archives, 32-34 Second Ave., at Second St. (477-2714)—Films showing in either the Courthouse Theatre or the Maya Deren Theatre. Four films by Aki Kaurismäki, in Finnish. Sept. 6-9 at 7: "Shadows in Paradise" (1986). . . . Sept. 6-9 at 9:45: "Crime and Punishment" (1983). . . . Sept. 4-5 at 7 and Sept. 6-9 at 8:20: "Calamari Union" (1984). . . . Sept. 7-13 at 5:30 and 10:30: "Ariel" (†). . . . ¶ Sept. 6-9 at 7: "How to Be Louise" (1989, Anne Flournoy); and "Moona Luna" (1990, Emily Breer). . . . ¶ Sept. 6-9 at 9: "Tales from the Winnipeg Film Group," a program of six short films.

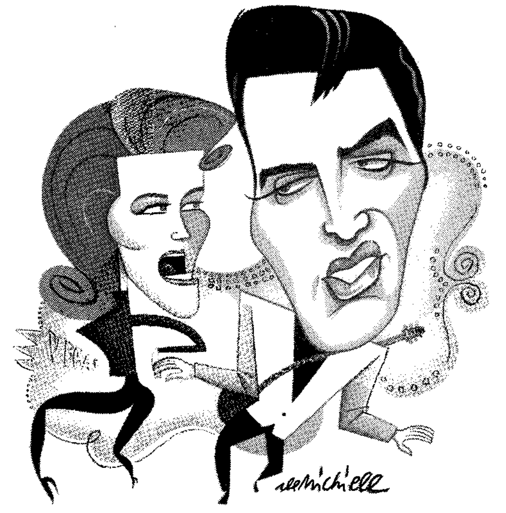
IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

Akira Kurosawa's Dreams—Directed by Kurosawa. In Japanese. (Reviewed in this issue.) (57th St. Playhouse.)

Alexander's Ragtime Band (1938)—The twenty Irving Berlin songs are reason enough for seeing the film, but you have to be prepared for the persistent, mosquitolike irritation of the plot—from 1911 to 1939, two songwriters (Tyrone Power and Don Ameche) are rivals for the affections of Alice Faye, who smiles her overripe, slow smile. Her mellow voice is wonderful on the title song, and you want to cheer her rendition of "When That Midnight Choo-Choo Leaves for Alabam'," but you may get to shuddering when she ponders the First World War (exhibited to us in three seconds of newsreel shots) and murmurs, "It was all so futile, wasn't it?" This big, lavish Twentieth Century Fox musical, directed by Henry King, has Ethel Merman, Jack Haley, Dixie Dunbar, Chick Chandler, Douglas Fowley, John Carradine, Helen Westley, Ruth Terry, Wally Vernon, and Jean Hersholt. Sets by Boris Leven; dances staged by Seymour Felix; the writers include Kathryn Scola, Lamar Trotti, Richard Sherman, and Irving Berlin. —P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Sept. 9-10.)



At the Biograph Cinema, Ann-Margret and Elvis Presley in "Viva Las Vegas"

Arachnophobia—It's O.K. You don't feel suckered, though you don't feel elated, either. A deadly arachnid that is discovered in Venezuela kills a young photographer, crawls into his coffin, and travels from the Amazon to the fictional little town of Canaima, California. There, the hairy-legged intruder—a tarantula as big as a big guy's fist—breeds with a harmless domestic spider, and troops of poisonous bugs begin marching out of bathroom drains. But when it comes down to the basics of scare comedy the arachnids are short on personality, and so is the movie. The script, credited to Don Jakoby and Wesley Strick, has too many B-picture precursors, and the first-time director, Frank Marshall, is like a Boy Scout remaking "Jaws." Jeff Daniels is smooth as the doctor with the phobia, but his dread seems shallow. The doctor's wife (Harley Jane Kozak) is presented as the fearless, competent one; then she's dropped from view. John Goodman, in the role of the local exterminator, brings up the energy level. The witless musical score, by Trevor Jones, is a flat-out insult.—P.K. (Embassy.)

Ariel—This antic, briskly dreamlike road movie, by the young Finnish director Aki Kaurismäki, takes us along a route from Lapland to Helsinki, and the unfamiliarity of the sights is bracing. The eerily placid snow-covered landscape is beautifully photographed (by Timo Salminen). There's a haunted stillness to this terrain, a real chill—which, once the taciturn hero, Taisto (Turo Pajala), reaches Helsinki, turns into a more conventional hipster cool. Kaurismäki puts his resolutely inarticulate hero through all the usual deadpan routines in grungy settings: Taisto meets small-time crooks, has random and sometimes violent adventures, and, in general, bounces around like a pinball in that crazy machine called contemporary life. The movie isn't terribly original—essentially, it's an affectionate ripoff of early-sixties Godard—but it's good-humored and fairly unassuming. Kaurismäki has the sense not to fuss over his effects, so his postmodern vaudeville sketches go down easily, and the whole thing's over in seventy-four minutes. Also with Susanna Haavisto and Matti Pellonpää. In Finnish.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 8/27/90.) (Bleecker St. Cinema; through Sept. 6. . . . ¶ Anthology Film Archives; Sept. 7-13.)

The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover—A movie about a crude British thug, Albert Spica (Michael Gambon), whose favorite method of terrorizing people is ramming things down their throats. Albert himself eats only haute cuisine; he and his wife (Helen Mirren) dine every night at a posh restaurant called Le Hollandais. This is an Art Movie, refined and terribly formal; the director, Peter Greenaway (who also wrote the script), places this barbarian smack in the middle of "painterly" compositions and encourages us to see him as a steaming hunk of offal desecrating the beauty of an artist's creation. He looks at Albert with the disdainful stare that the pukka sahib directs at a servant who has inconvenienced him. Greenaway, however, has a lot more in common with his loutish protagonist than he thinks. He obviously regards himself as an aesthetic virtuoso, but he's just a cultural omnivore. (He chews with his mouth open—we can identify almost every piece of art that has fed his imagination.) The only thing in this movie's tidy, hermetic universe that Greenaway is unable to control, or disguise with fancy brushwork, is his loathing of the body. The movie features several gross-out scenes, including a climactic act of cannibalism; the Motion Picture Association of America gave it an X rating. (The distributors released it unrated.) What's offensive about the picture, though, isn't its violence or its visceral shocks but the patrician arrogance, the smug aestheticism, the snobbishness that suffuse every frame. Greenaway is an intellectual bully: he pushes us to the ground and kicks art in our faces. Also with Alan Howard (the Lover) and Richard Bohringer (the Cook). Cinematography by Sacha Vierny.—T.R. (5/7/90) (Quad Cinema.)

Darkman—With Liam Neeson, Frances McDormand, Colin Friels, and Larry Drake; directed by Sam Raimi. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Manhattan Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, Regency, and National Twin.)

The Freshman—This comedy, written and directed by Andrew Bergman, wears its zaniness on its sleeve. The hero, Clark (Matthew Broderick), is a quiet young man from Vermont who has just entered the N.Y.U. film school. Within a few days of arriving in New York, he's making deliveries for an "importer" named Carmine Sabatini (Marlon Brando) and being treated like a member of Sabatini's family (or Family): Carmine's daughter (Penelope Ann Miller) has told her father that she wants to marry Clark, and the old man embraces him, with alarming enthusiasm, as "the son I never had." The movie is overinsistent and very erratic. When Bergman's jokes are good, they're sensational; when they're not so good, he repeats them again and again, as if they'd become funnier through familiarity. In this picture he has actors who play his sort of material to perfection. Miller and Bruno Kirby, as Carmine's fast-talking weaselly nephew, are hilariously unfazed by the family's criminal activities, and Broderick calibrates his reactions with remarkable comic dexterity. And Brando seems to be in a bizarre and wonderful world of his own. People in the movie keep staring at him and commenting on his resemblance to Don Corleone, and he plays along, parodying himself marvellously. In his scenes the movie seems less frantic; its lunacy takes on an air of serenity—a deeper, more inexplicable, and much funnier weirdness. Also with Paul Benedict, Maximilian Schell, B. D. Wong, and Bert Parks (belting out "Tequila" and Dylan's sardonic "Maggie's Farm" at a formal dinner).—T.R. (7/30/90) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Worldwide Cinemas, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Ghost—It sounds like a horror movie, but it's a romantic fairy tale. The scariest thing about it is its shamelessness. A young New York bank executive, Sam (Patrick Swayze), is killed, on the street, at a moment in his life when everything seems to be going his way. After his death, Sam sticks around, as a spirit (and Swayze stays onscreen, as a body). He attends his funeral; watches his beautiful girlfriend, Molly (Demi Moore), drift grief-stricken through the spectacular loft they had just moved into; and then devotes himself to protecting her from the people who killed him. Through a reluctant psychic (Whoopi Goldberg), he tries to communicate with Molly; later, an experienced ghost (Vincent Schiavelli) teaches him how to move objects and break stuff. In this movie, death is treated as if it were merely a form of disability, one of those handicaps we've seen people struggle bravely with in TV movies—something for the individual to triumph over, with will power, hard work, and love. This creamy-toned fantasy, directed by Jerry Zucker from a screenplay by Bruce Joel Rubin, certainly pushes the audience's emotional buttons. It's a twentysomething hybrid of "It's a Wonderful Life" and some of the gooier, more solemn episodes of "The Twilight Zone," and there's not a trace of wit or irony in it. Its images of death have a soothing banality, like a greeting-card message from the world beyond. Also with Tony Goldwyn and Rick Aviles.—T.R. (7/30/90) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews Tower East, Art Greenwich Twin, and Loews Paramount.)

Hush . . . Hush, Sweet Charlotte (1965)—Bette Davis in a Grand Guignol melodrama directed by Robert Aldrich—an attempt to reproduce the box-office success of their camp gothic "What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?," in which Davis's co-star was Joan Crawford. Crawford was to have appeared in this one also, but became ill and was replaced by Olivia de Havilland. Davis is a rich, dotty recluse living in a moldy mansion in Louisiana; she wanders about the shadowy rooms in streaming hair and billowing nighties, whispering telepathic endearments to her long-dead daddy. De Havilland is her treacherous cousin, Agnes Moorehead the witchlike housekeeper, and Joseph Cotten the family doctor. The story, redolent of mutilation and assorted horrors, is from a novel by Henry Farrell, who also was the source of the earlier film. A lot of people seemed to enjoy the spectacle of Davis crawling and howling and looking wildly repulsive. With Victor Buono, Mary Astor, Bruce Dern, George Kennedy, and Cecil Kellaway.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Sept. 6 and 9.)

Last Tango in Paris (1972)—Exploitation films had been supplying mechanized sex—sex as physical stimulation but without passion or emotional violence. Then, in this film, Bernardo Bertolucci used sex to express the characters' drives. Marlon Brando, as the aging American, Paul, is working out his aggression on the young bourgeois French girl, Jeanne (Maria Schneider), and the physical menace of sexuality that is emotionally charged is such a departure from everything that audiences had come to expect at the movies that the film created a sensation. It's a bold and imaginative work—a great work. When Brando improvises within Bertolucci's structure, his full art is realized; his performance is intuitive, rapt, princely. Working with Brando, Bertolucci achieves realism with the terror of actual experience still alive on the screen. With Jean-Pierre Léaud, Massimo Girotti, Catherine Allegret, and Maria Michi. Script by Bertolucci and the editor, Franco Arcalli; cinematography by Vittorio Storaro; music by Gato Barbieri; production design by Ferdinando Scarfiotti; produced by Alberto Grimaldi. (The film has been subjected to many varieties of legal prosecution, particularly in Italy. The version being shown here is the original X-rated version.) In French and English.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 9.)

May Fools—Louis Malle's new film takes place in May, 1968, when, for a few chaotic weeks, French society seemed on the verge of remaking itself: students were rioting, workers were striking, and the country came to a standstill. The characters in this picture are far removed from the stirring street theatre of May, '68, but they're affected by it nonetheless. The setting is a shabby estate presided over by Milou (Michel Piccoli), a genial man in his sixties who lives the life of a lazy country sensualist: he keeps bees, browns in the sun, and gropes the housekeeper. On the sunny day when the story begins, his mother dies, and he summons the rest of the family for the funeral and the reading of the will. There's a sense that things are about to change, both on the large scale of French society and on the infinitely smaller one of Milou's life. Malle and his co-writer, Jean-Claude Carrière, use the upheaval of May, '68, very deftly: it intrudes on their comedy like distant thunder on a sunny day, but the threatened downpour of Meaning never develops—we get a cooling shower of light ironies instead. Piccoli gives one of the best performances of his long career: he's vigorous and radiantly good-humored. Although its charm sometimes feels a bit too easy, the film is enjoyable throughout. It just bounces along to the rhythm of its remarkable score, composed and played by the eighty-two-year-old jazz violinist Stéphane Grappelli; the movie, like the music, has a delicate swing to it. Also with Miou-Miou and Michel Duchaussoy. In French.—T.R. (7/16/90) (Lincoln Plaza.)

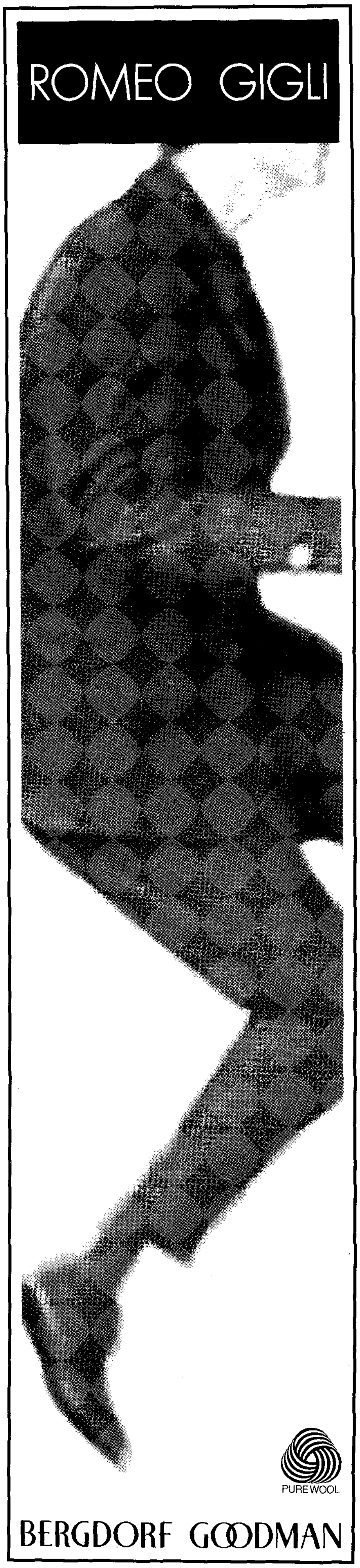
The Men (1950)—Marlon Brando made his first screen appearance as the paraplegic Second World War hero, rebelling furiously and helplessly against his condition; paradoxically, Brando gives an overpoweringly physical performance. He's amazingly sensitive and intense—no one before him who smoldered onscreen ever gave off so much heat. Fred Zinnemann directed, with sureness and tact, using the paraplegic patients in a California veterans' hospital as part of the cast. With Jack Webb, Teresa Wright, and Everett Sloane. Conventional melodramatic banalities mar the Carl Foreman script, but it's an economical, vivid narrative.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 9.)

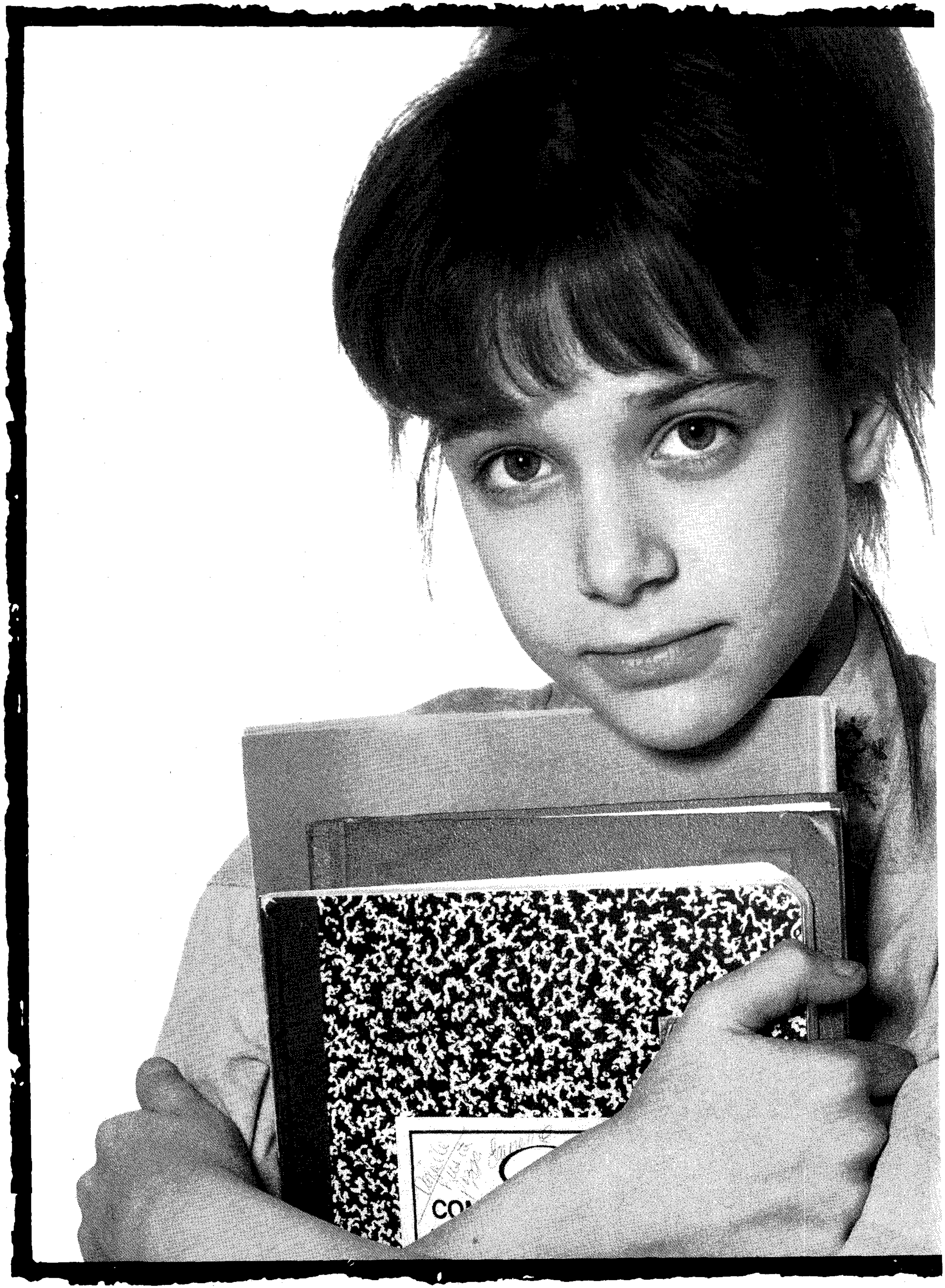
Mo' Better Blues—The hero of Spike Lee's film is a trumpet player named Bleek Gilliam (Denzel Washington), who is squarely in the tradition of obsessive, single-minded movie jazz musicians. Lee's script presents Bleek with a series of choices, about his love life, his artistic life, and the connections between them. The problem with the picture is that it doesn't frame the hero's choices so that we know what's at stake. And Lee doesn't seem to have thought through the role of the music. He has set the film in the present—in pointed contrast with other recent movies about jazz—but his attitude toward the music's relationship to contemporary culture is incoherent. The picture has a distracted, meandering quality. Denzel Washington's magnetism and intelligence keep the movie watchable even during its most aimless stretches, but the script doesn't allow him to shape the performance. Lee's filmmaking here is all notions and no shape: hard, fierce blowing, rather than real music. Also with Wesley Snipes, Joie Lee, Cynda Williams, Giancarlo Esposito, Dick Anthony Williams, John and Nicholas Turturro, and the late Robin Harris. Lee himself plays a comic lovable-sidekick role. The score is by Bill Lee (the director's father), and the music of Bleek's quintet is played by the Branford Marsalis Quintet, with Terence Blanchard as the trumpet soloist.—T.R. (8/13/90) (Bijou Cinema, Baronet, Quad Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ 86th Street East Twin. Evenings only.)

Presumed Innocent—A ponderous adaptation of Scott Turow's cunningly plotted mystery novel. The director, Alan J. Pakula, has shot and paced the movie as if it weren't a mystery but a serious character study, an art film. It's lit (by Gordon Willis) like "Cries and Whispers," only without the bright-red accents: the movie's palette seems to consist of brown and gray—earnest, business-suit colors. The lunacy of treating this story as a deep exploration of character is that the only thing we really want to know about the character in question—Rusty Sabich (Harrison Ford), a Midwestern prosecutor accused of murdering one of his colleagues (Greta Scacchi)—is: Did he do it or not? Ford, in what is probably an unplayable role, has to maintain a tense, repressed, impenetrable expression throughout. Bonnie Bedelia, as Rusty's nervous, self-deprecating wife, gives lovely shadings to a tough part. As the judge presiding over Rusty's trial, Paul Winfield supplies some sorely needed comedy. And Raul Julia, as the hero's lawyer, is an elegant, commanding presence in the courtroom scenes. Also with Brian Dennehy. Screenplay by Pakula and Frank Pierson.—T.R. (8/13/90) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, 34th St. East, Cinema I, 68th St. Playhouse, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

The Sky's the Limit (1943)—Dreary R.K.O. musical, with Fred Astaire as a Flying Tiger war hero. He's cast, unfortunately, opposite the wholesome Joan Leslie, with her girl-next-door big smiles. But Astaire does some beautiful solo work, including the memorable "One for My Baby (and One for the Road)." With Robert Benchley, Robert Ryan, Eric Blore, Elizabeth Patterson, Marjorie Gateson, Paul Hurst, Clarence Kolb, and Freddie Slack's orchestra. Directed by Edward H. Griffith; written by Frank Fenton and Lynn Root; songs by Johnny Mercer and Harold Arlen.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Sept. 6-8.)

The Sound of Music (1965)—Set in Austria in 1938, this is a tribute to freshness that is so mechanically engineered and so shrewdly calculated that the background music rises, the already soft focus blurs and melts, and, upon the instant, you can hear all those noses blowing in the theatre. Whom could this operetta offend? Only those of us who, despite the fact that we may respond, loathe being manipulated in this way and are aware of how cheap and ready-made are the responses we are made to feel. We may become even





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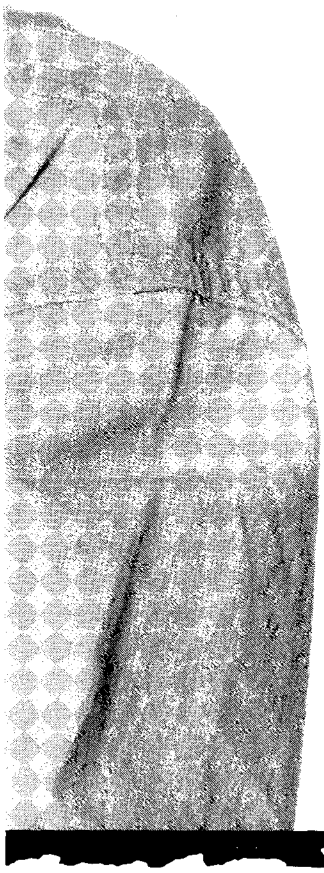

"Grown-ups tell us, 'Just say no.' That's easy for them to say."

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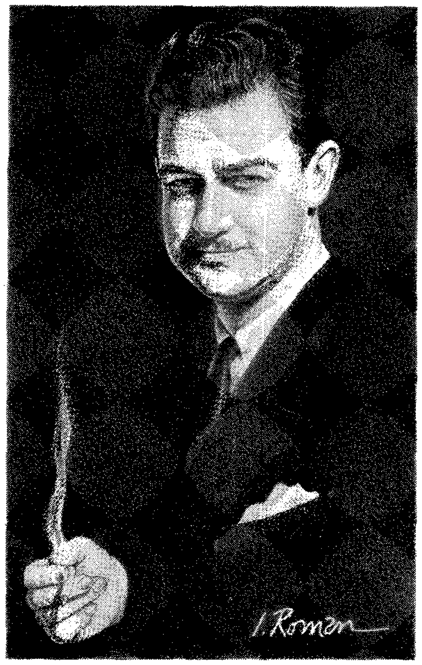
more aware of the way we have been turned into emotional and aesthetic imbeciles when we hear ourselves humming the sickly, goody-goody songs. The dauntless, scrubbed-faced heroine (Julie Andrews), in training to become a nun, is sent from the convent to serve as governess to the motherless Von Trapp children, and turns them into a happy little troupe of singers before marrying their father (Christopher Plummer). She says goodbye to the nuns and leaves them outside at the fence, as she enters the cathedral to be married. Squeezed again, and the moisture comes out of thousands—millions—of eyes and noses. Wasn't there perhaps one little Von Trapp who didn't want to sing his head off, or who screamed that he wouldn't act out little glockenspiel routines for Papa's party guests, or who got nervous and threw up if he had to get on a stage? The only thing the director, Robert Wise, couldn't smooth out was the sinister, archly decadent performance by Christopher Plummer—he of the thin, twisted smile; he seems to be in a different movie altogether. With Eleanor Parker, Richard Haydn, Peggy Wood, Anna Lee, and Marni Nixon. The music is by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II; the script by Ernest Lehman is based on the stage version by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse.—P.K. (Gotham Cinema. . . . ¶ Museum of Modern Art; Sept. 9-10.)

Sullivan's Travels (1941)—Writer-director Preston Sturges's comedy about a popular—slightly fatuous—Hollywood director (Joel McCrea), who feels that his hits, such as "Ants in Your Plants of 1939," aren't worthy of a war-devastated world. To research his next project, a relevant film to be called "O Brother, Where Art Thou?," he gets dressed up as a tramp and goes out to investigate the lower depths. Sturges is more at home in slapstick irony (as in "The Lady Eve," earlier in '41) than in the mixed tones of this comedy-melodrama, but it's a memorable film nevertheless. With Veronica Lake, underacting with perfect composure, and Margaret Hayes, and many of the actors Sturges delighted in and used repeatedly—William Demarest, Franklin Pangborn, Robert Warwick, Porter Hall, Eric Blore, Esther Howard, Jimmy Conlin, Willard Robertson, J. Farrell MacDonald, Roscoe Ates, Dewey Robinson, Chester Conklin, Arthur Hoyt, Robert Greig, Frank Moran, Harry Rosenthal, Monte Blue, and others. Sturges himself can be glimpsed behind Veronica Lake on a set inside the movie studio.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; starting Sept. 7.)

Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!—Pedro Almodóvar's new movie gets off to a fast start, like a windup toy, but it runs out of momentum early, and Almodóvar can't figure out how to start it up again. The story, about a released mental patient (Antonio Banderas) who follows a sexy actress (Victoria Abril) and then takes her prisoner, seems to tie the director's wild imagination down, and his efforts to keep his (and the audience's) blood circulating betray some desperation. Neither the kidnapper's romantic obsession nor his captive's eventual love for him is especially convincing. And we don't fully enjoy the perverse humor of the situation, either: we've seen the victim subdued by a hard slap, and that image is too strong to forget. The limpness of "Tie Me Up!" suggests that Almodòvar is either a confused director or a tired one—probably a bit of both. It's as if he had made the movie solely to satisfy the public's demand for a new Almodóvar film. Also with Francisco Rabal, Loles Leon, and Lola Cardona. Screenplay by Almodóvar. In Spanish.—T.R. (5/7/90) (Quad Cinema, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

Total Recall—This fifty-million-dollar science-fiction thriller is full of relentless action and spectacular effects, and it's no fun at all. It's as heavy-spirited as its star, Arnold Schwarzenegger: imposing and implacable, like the killer robot Arnold played (or embodied) in "The Terminator." The script, by Ronald Shusett, Dan O'Bannon, and Gary Goldman, is based on a story by Philip K. Dick; the plot keeps twisting and turning, but we stop following it before the picture is half over. It's just a frame for meaty action sequences—a skeleton nestled deep inside ballooning muscles. The director, Paul Verhoeven ("RoboCop"), composes striking images, but they're oppressive and completely impersonal: every weird angle, every closeup of a face contorted with pain, every splash of bright-red blood is an effect borrowed from horror comics. The picture itself is a terminator: when it's over, you feel as if the life had been pounded out of you, and you never want to go to the movies again. Also with Sharon Stone, Ronny Cox, Rachel Ticotin, Mel Johnson, Jr., Michael Champion, and Ray Baker. Cinematography by Jost Vacano.—T.R. (6/18/90) (Criterion Center.)

Two for the Road (1967)—Other films by the director, Stanley Donen, are not so edgy. It's the self-consciously witty scriptwriter, Frederic Raphael, who set his brittle stamp on this story of a husband and wife—Albert Finney and Audrey Hepburn—seen on European trips at different periods of their lives, not consecutively but shifting back and forth. The intention is to show a modern marriage in which ideal people, in love, and successful, are still not happy. Yet there's always a swimming pool for the characters to take their pratfalls in. Raphael is too much in love with old-movie comedy romances: he puts in tedious running jokes, such as the wife's forever turning up with the passport the husband loses. And at the same time the film is trying for a bitter comment on modern marital ennui, of the "La Notte" variety. The facile, comic bits set off audience expectations that are then betrayed, and the clever, bitter stuff just seems sour. Still, at times Hepburn is surpassingly beautiful—particularly at the end, when she's meant to be roughly the age she actually is, and her hard, lacquered mini-face is set off by a shining-disk gown. As the husband, Finney seems surly and beefy and rather infantile—which makes Hepburn look all the more gallant and poignant when the wife tries to make the best of things. The caricatures of Americans, played by William Daniels and Eleanor Bron, which would be embarrassingly overdone at fifty yards, are in closeup. With Jaqueline Bisset, Claude Dauphin, and Nadia Grey.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Sept. 10-11.)



A Preston Sturges festival at Film Forum 2

The Two Jakes—Directed by and starring Jack Nicholson, this sequel to "Chinatown" (1974) begins absorbingly, with hard-edged dialogue and muffled echoes of the earlier film. Nicholson's Jake Gittes, the private detective specializing in divorce, takes on a client, Jake Berman (Harvey Keitel), a budding real-estate developer, and finds himself caught up in a murder case that somehow involves Katherine Mulwray, the daughter of Evelyn Mulwray, the Faye Dunaway character he loved in "Chinatown." But when we've got the setup clear in our heads and expect the movie to rouse itself, to develop a present tense and get going, it remains airless and murky. It proceeds phlegmatically, bringing in more and more characters and complications, and losing us. We don't get the film-noir thrill of mystery and resolution. By the time the plot comes together (more or less), we're benumbed. As the director, Nicholson doesn't give the characters any snap and he doesn't build the scenes; it's as if he were scratching his head each time the camera got turned on. As Gittes he wears a bitter half smile and gives a groggy performance. It's a spiritless movie, dark and mannered. There are good people in the cast—Meg Tilly, Madeleine Stowe, Rubén Blades, Frederic Forrest, Eli Wallach, David Keith, Joe Mantell, Richard Farnsworth—but they're emotionally distanced from us, and they don't seem to matter. The script (though not the narration) is mostly by Robert Towne; the cinematography is by Vilmos Zsigmond.—P.K. (Angelika Film Center, Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews New York Twin, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

WILD AT HEART—Right from the start, just about everything is wrong with David Lynch's new movie, and the wrongness has an escalating, vertiginous quality. Every false move seems to lead to another, more disastrous than the one before. It's a buzzing, hyperkinetic picture, but its wildness is all on the surface: the images are elaborately conceived, arresting, and meaningless, like tattoos. The novel by Barry Gifford on which Lynch based his screenplay is a languorous, arty trifle about a pair of lovers named Sailor (Nicolas Cage) and Lula (Laura Dern), who drive from North Carolina to Texas and stop at ratty hotels and motels along the way; they're hard-lovin' losers who smoke a lot and don't get to the place they set out for (California). Their happiness is threatened by a variety of kinky villains, mostly of Lynch's invention: Gifford's poky Deep South odyssey is now an orgy of evil, full of graphic violence and grotesque craziness. The shocks don't have much resonance, though; the weirdness here is inexpressive and trivial, even silly. And the lurid villainy always seems diversionary, a baroque disguise for a bland, lifeless, and overfamiliar story. The movie is one startling lapse of taste after another; it's a sorry spectacle. Also with Diane Ladd, Willem Dafoe, Harry Dean Stanton, Isabella Rossellini, Grace Zabriskie, J. E. Freeman, W. Morgan Sheppard, Calvin Lockhart, David Patrick Kelly, and Crispin Glover.—T.R. (8/27/90) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and 62nd & Broadway. . . . ¶ Beekman; through Sept. 11.)

THE WITCHES—The ads say "From the imagination of Jim Henson and director Nicolas Roeg." It would be more accurate to say "From the imagination of the writer Roald Dahl." This quirky fairy-tale movie is about the diabolical, gleeful evil that's hidden behind normality. (It's about women who secretly hate children.) What Henson and Roeg supply is their craftsmanship and their affection for the novel's adult, calmly macabre tone. (The movie promises to be an enduring, slightly scandalous joy.) As the Grand High Witch of the World, the black-clad Anjelica Huston lifts her arm up high in a towering salute and, addressing the witches of England at their annual meeting, held at a seacoast hotel, she outlines her plan: all the children in the land are to be turned into mice. The nine-year-old Luke (Jasen Fisher), who overhears her speech, is hunted down and transformed, but, blessed with a practical-minded Norwegian granny (Mai Zetterling) who's an expert on witches, he sets out to foil the plan. The movie doesn't have Dahl's narrative confidence, and it goes in for a little sweetening, but it has major compensations. Pale, bespectacled Luke is rather mousy to start with, and when he becomes a light-brown critter who can be cradled in his granny's hand it seems almost a fulfillment. His greedy pal Bruno (Charles Potter) seems fulfilled, too—as a blobby gray rodent. The two mice are triumphs for Henson's workshop. Zetterling is the hypnotic storytelling granny of our dreams; Huston is a gutsy, camp witch, with an accent that slips like her features; her terrified underlings—bald, drag-queen witches—are like a child's drawings of the Devil. With Bill Paterson and Brenda Blethyn as Bruno's parents, Rowan Atkinson as the hotel manager, and Jane Horrocks as Miss Irvine. The script is by Allan Scott; the exteriors were filmed in Bergen, Norway, and at the Headland Hotel, Newquay, Cornwall.—P.K. (Eastside Cinema, 8th St. Playhouse, 23rd St. West Triplex, Loews Festival, Metro Cinema, and West Side Cinema.)

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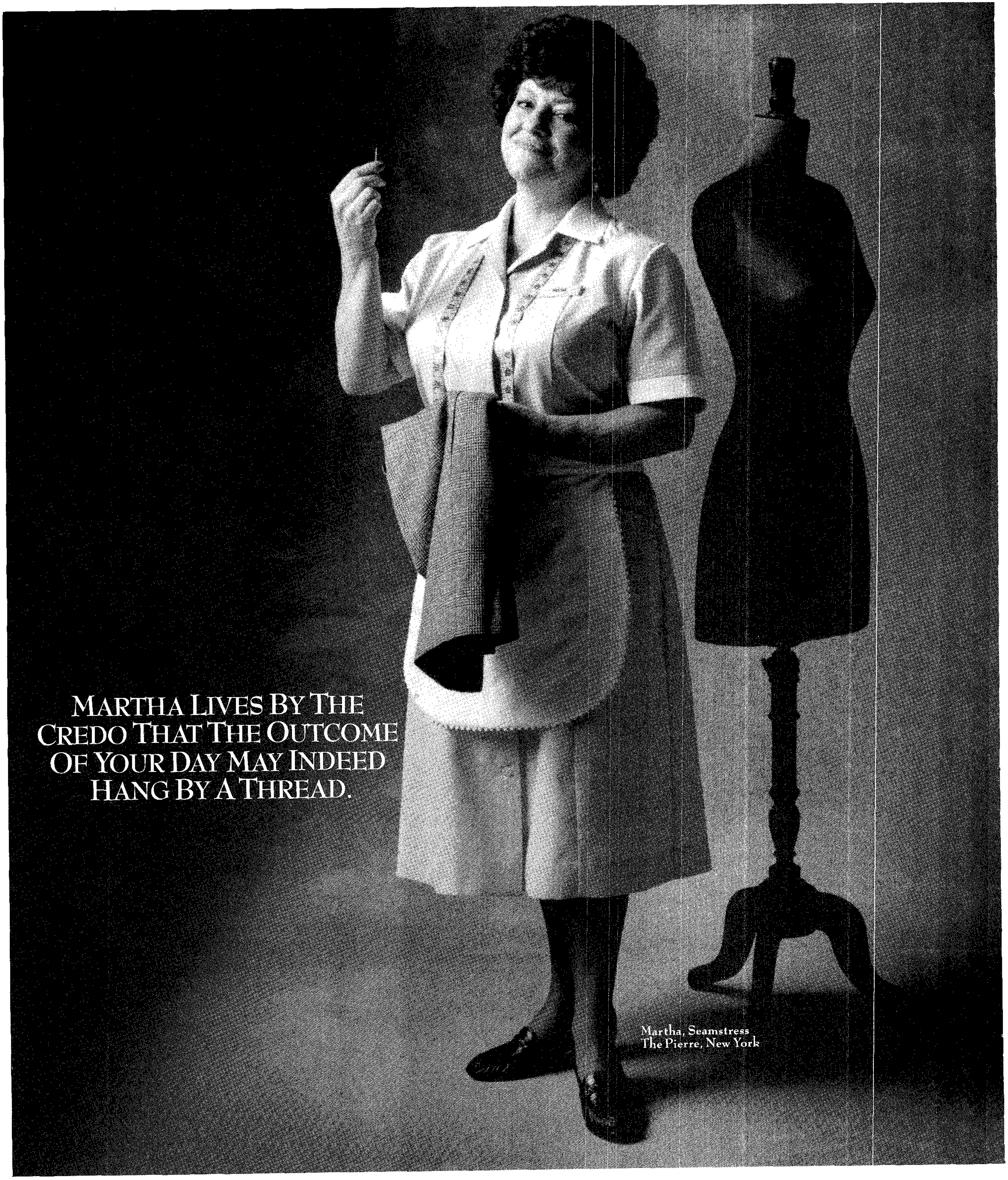
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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

AMERICANS tend to examine distant regimes, and the commitments our government has made to them, only during times of crisis. About Iraq, for instance, we have suddenly been told that its leader, Saddam Hussein, has emerged as the Hitler of the Middle East, a ruthless bully who wants to take over the entire region, and thus threatens America's "way of life." It is to prevent this, we are told, that American forces are being rushed to Saudi Arabia.

Americans should not be embarrassed at having been taken by surprise by the emergence of this Hitler. Only last year, after all, Hussein was the beneficiary of loans from the United States that enabled him to import more than a billion dollars' worth of American farm goods. (Iraq was the world's second-largest recipient of Department of Agriculture credits, after Mexico.) Indeed, only days before Hussein invaded Kuwait, officials of the Bush Administration were lobbying congressmen who had been angered by his bellicose language toward Israel and his dismal human-rights record to persuade them not to apply sanctions to Iraq. And, though American officials from President Bush on down have lost no opportunity since the beginning of the crisis to remind the world of Hussein's "ruthlessness" in using poison gas, when Hussein was actually using it—against the Iranian "human wave" attacks, during the eight-year Iran-Iraq War—officials of the Reagan Administration were remarkably muted in their condemnations.

Hussein, of course, did not change overnight into a ruthless tyrant; what changed was the attitude of the United States toward him. And that change casts doubt on the observation, so frequently made during the last weeks, that the events that sent American forces to Saudi Arabia constitute "the first crisis of the post-Cold War era."

In reality, despite the altered nature of our relationship with the Soviet Union, the thinking that has driven our policy toward Iraq is profoundly imbued with Cold War attitudes. Those attitudes can be summarized in a Middle Eastern saying that has been much quoted lately: "The enemy of my enemy is my friend." Looking back, one can see that the tragedy of American policy during the Cold War lay not in the country's choice of enemies but in the damage it repeatedly inflicted on itself—practically and morally—by its choice of friends.

In the nineteen-eighties, Iran was an enemy of the United States, and for that reason Iraq, which in 1980 invaded Iran, became its friend. The United States shared intelligence with the Iraqi military—including, it is said, sensitive satellite photographs of the deployment of Iranian forces. It organized and led a worldwide arms embargo against Iran while doing nothing to prevent Iraq from arming itself with the most modern weapons. Finally, during the "tanker war" of 1987 and 1988, the United States sent its warships into the Persian Gulf to protect the tankers of Iraq's closest ally, the rich sheikhdom of Kuwait.

Kuwait had chosen to ally itself with Iraq for the same "enemy of my enemy" reasons that the United States had. Ayatollah Khomeini had been calling on the Shia Muslims and other downtrodden elements within Kuwait to overthrow their masters and install an Islamic government. Therefore, Iran was Kuwait's enemy, and since Iraq was fighting a desperate war against Iran, Kuwait supported, with billions of dollars in loans and credits, the regime of Saddam Hussein.

Together, Kuwait and the United States did much to create Hussein: they did not make him ruthless or brutal—he was already both—but they made him powerful. They helped him buy an army of a million men and an arsenal of sophisticated weapons, and they sustained him during the darkest hours of the war. Kuwait acted because it feared for the stability of its regime, with all its inequalities, in the face of Khomeini's revolutionary call. Instead, Kuwait might have tried to strengthen itself by reforming its autocracy, by giving some voice and power to those people who were most attracted by Khomeini. But it was easier, less painful, to give money to Saddam Hussein and let him silence Khomeini's appeal.

As for the United States—the protector of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the other Gulf states—it might have urged Kuwait to liberalize, might

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have sought to shore up its ally by insisting on reform, just as it might have done with the Shah, or Somoza, or any number of other convenient and now forgotten allies. But the United States chose to exert even less influence on the domestic policies of its allies in the Gulf than it had on the policies of the Shah. It chose, rather, to join the Kuwaiti sheikhs in supporting a dictator who, with his tanks and poison gas, could check the threat from Khomeini's Iran. Such missed opportunities characterize decades of Cold War thinking.

After the war ended, Hussein, with a huge army to keep busy, and enormous war debts to pay off, turned to Iraq's historical claims on wealthy Kuwait. When, more than a week before the invasion, he massed tanks and troops on Kuwait's border, the United States hardly responded. In the end, the invasion of Kuwait was permitted to happen because the one nation that might have been able to prevent it—by restationing aircraft carriers, by "showing resolve"—could not bring itself to believe that the monster it had helped create would turn against one of its creators. By the time American officials had got over their astonishment, Iraqi troops were looting Kuwait's central bank.

It was only then—and with an exaggerated determination, meant to compensate for the initial misjudgment—that aircraft carriers and troops were sent. President Bush, angry at what he saw as a betrayal, offered uncompromising words ("This will not stand"), uncompromising terms (Hussein must withdraw at once from Kuwait), and a barrage of rhetoric implying that an American attack could come at any time. And yet it does not seem likely that such threats, even in conjunction with the United Nations embargo and the presence of more than forty-five thousand American troops in Saudi Arabia, will be enough to make Hussein withdraw with nothing to show for his efforts.

It may be that there is no way to achieve President Bush's stated objectives—not to mention his implied one of unseating Hussein—short of a direct attack on Iraqi forces. And it is anyone's guess what such an attack might lead to. Nonetheless, the airwaves have been filled with familiar voices warning that a failure to force Hussein from Kuwait would undermine American credibility. "We cannot, after the deployment into the Gulf, march out of the Gulf without having achieved these objectives," Henry Kissinger says. "The consequence of a setback would be disastrous."

Such words from current and former high officials are hardly new; they are almost ritual Cold War locutions. Nor is this the first time that an American President has become disenchanted with an erstwhile friend—General Noriega, his present obscurity notwithstanding, is a recent example, and President Diem, in South Vietnam, a more distant one—or the first time that American soldiers have found themselves in a far-off place preparing to defend still unclear notions of credibility and resolve. If Americans have learned anything, it is that those notions are not a very good basis on which to begin a war whose duration and intensity are impossible to predict. Amid all the talk of Hussein's ruthlessness, there has been very little discussion of the way American policy helped him acquire the powerful forces he now commands, of what led him to invade Kuwait, and of what it will really take—and what it is really worth, in American lives and treasure—to get him out. Such discussions on the part of our leaders might begin to guide us toward true post-Cold War thinking. We will know we have achieved that kind of thinking if under some future American foreign policy the description "enemy of my enemy" no longer qualifies a brutal and dangerous dictator to be an American friend.

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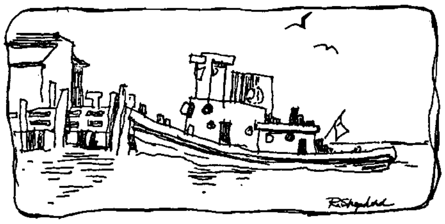
Out of the Woods

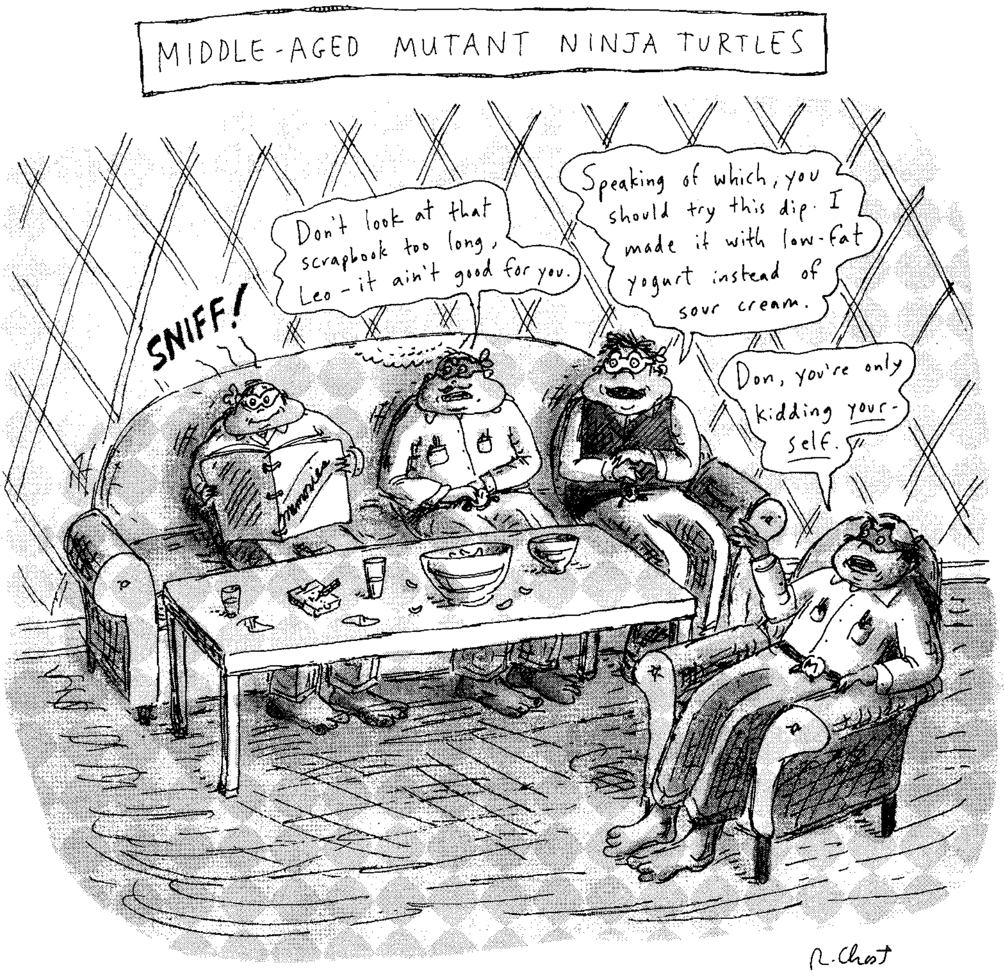
A RECENTLY returned vacationer writes:

With the cover of just about every magazine on the stands this summer featuring some tie-in with the movie "Wild at Heart" or the TV series "Twin Peaks," David Lynch and his works may be too much with us. But when my friend Caroline, who grew up in Seattle, and I set off for a couple of weeks in the Pacific Northwest we decided right away that neither Lynch's mainstream overexposure nor our disappointment with the lame cliff-hanger finale of his TV show would prevent us from taking a side trip to "Twin Peaks" country to see if we could find some traces of the show's dark, hilarious Americana.



"The *Real* Twin Peaks," according to a T-shirt I bought at the Alpine Blossom & Gift Shoppe, in North Bend, Washington, is the Snoqualmie Valley, which stretches for thirty miles along the foothills of the Cascades, a half hour's drive east of Seattle. Lynch filmed the two-hour pilot for the series there early last year, and most of the exterior shots (waterfall, sawmill, roadside diner, high school, mountains) were made in the area. The sheriff of Lynch's town says that Twin Peaks is "a long way from the world," but the Snoqualmie Valley is no isolated retreat. Interstate 90, a six-lane highway, makes the trip to Seattle an easy commute. Several new housing developments are going up. Next to a factory-outlet mall Nintendo is building a distribution warehouse the size of six football fields.

From the streets of North Bend, which is toward the south end of the valley, the Alpine Blossom, with a T-shirt window display, and the Mar-T Café (it's the RR Diner in the show), with a "HOME OF TWIN PEAKS PIES" banner hanging from its roof, seemed to be making only meagre attempts to exploit the area's television notoriety. We found, though, that the Alpine Blossom had produced a note card with a picture of Mt. Si, a big gray rampart that rises thirty-eight hundred feet above the valley, on the front, and with "Facts & History of the Real Twin Peaks" on the back. "Twin Peaks has become one of the most buzzed-about plot series since J.R. got plugged in a 1980 Dallas cliff-hanger," the card says. "The series is a story of our Valley as seen through a Hollywood Looking Glass, where the doughnuts, cherry pie, deer heads and even murder portray the evil lurking beneath a small town veneer." It also says, "Valley residents believe that Mt. Si is one of the twin peaks and Mt. Teneriffe is the other twin peak." And the Alpine Blossom sells "Twin Peaks" visor caps


MIDDLE-AGED MUTANT NINJA TURTLES
SNIFF!
Don't look at that scrapbook too long, Leo - it ain't good for you.
Speaking of which, you should try this dip. I made it with low-fat yogurt instead of sour cream.
Don, you're only kidding yourself.
Memories
R. Chast

(white with green letters, for $5.50), cassette tapes (Julee Cruise's album "Floating Into the Night," which includes "Falling," the "Twin Peaks" theme song, for $9.69), and, as a tribute to the show's bordello manager, Black Rose, dried roses dipped in black paint and tied with black ribbon (for $3.95). In addition, the shop sells, although not as a "Twin Peaks" item, a recipe book titled "American Pie," by Teresa Kennedy (for $5.95).

The Mar-T Café, just down the block, has made up some T-shirts, too. (The motto on these is F.B.I. Special Agent Dale Cooper's fourth-episode exclamation "This must be where pies go when they die!") A small log and a toy chain saw stand on the inside sill of the café's front window. (Any "Twin Peaks" fanatic will recognize these as references to the Log Lady, who talks to a pet log and says Lynchian things like "Shut your eyes and you'll burst into flames," and to a recent article in the *Star*, the supermarket tabloid, that characterized the valley as the scene of frequent chain-saw duels.) The Mar-T looks just like the RR on the outside, but inside it's smaller and not so well lit. Caroline and I had coffee—"damn good coffee"—and cherry pie (for $1.75 a slice) there, and looked through a copy of the local weekly newspaper, the *Valley Record*. While it contained no mention of "Twin Peaks," an item in Louise (Mom) Grady's gossip column had the tone we were after. "It turns out that all the rolling clouds of smoke seen in the skies above Snoqualmie several days ago was a slash burn on Weyerhaeuser lands," Mrs. Grady wrote. "I'm sure glad to know 'twas a controlled burn!" The paper also ran a help-wanted ad for a cook at the Mar-T (Hank Jennings, who served a stretch in prison for manslaughter and then shot the evil trucker Leo in the cliffhanger episode, has the job on TV), and this enigmatic personal ad: "ATTN: To whom it may concern. Do to the spotted owl controversy, Billy Williams is now contracting dog kennels."

* *

We would have enjoyed staying in the local equivalent of the Timber Baron Suite in Twin Peaks' Great Northern Hotel—the stand-in for the Great Northern is the Salish Lodge, four miles up the valley, in the town of Snoqualmie—but rooms at the Salish cost a hundred and sixty-five dollars a night, so we spent the night at the reasonably priced North Bend Motel instead. From "Little History of North Bend–Snoqualmie," a booklet we bought (for $4.95) in the motel lobby, we learned that *snoqualmie* is an Indian word for "moon," and that "the early pioneers found the valley so covered with forests that there was scarcely enough grass for a cow." (Much of the valley floor is now cleared for agriculture and housing.) Mt. Si was named after an early settler, Josiah Merritt, whose wife, Sally, was the third white woman in the valley. "Years of lonesomeness finally affected her mind," the booklet adds, without elaborating.

The next morning, we drove up the valley to the town of Snoqualmie, and it, too, except for a sign advertising "TWIN PEAKS BURGERS" outside a restaurant called Big Edd's, appeared to be playing down its television identity. Across the street from the Snoqualmie Historic Log Pavilion, which shelters a specimen of Douglas-fir old-growth glory, thirty-six feet in circumference, and some vintage logging equipment, a curio shop called Li'l Bit of This 'n That had posted in its window a newspaper clipping with the headline "SNOQUALMIE GOES HOLLYWOOD." The article noted that the seventy-year-old steam-belching Weyerhaeuser mill that appears in "Twin Peaks" was torn down soon after the pilot was filmed. (A barbershop next door had hung up one of the bright-yellow signs we saw displayed all over the Northwest: "THIS BUSINESS SUPPORTED BY TIMBER DOLLARS.")

We had a brunch of ham and eggs, pancakes, and muffins at the Salish Lodge, which is perched on a gray basalt cliff beside the top of Snoqualmie Falls. Our waitress, just like Leo's luscious vixen waitress wife, was named Shelly, but our Shelly was wearing a pale-blue ankle-length dress and a white apron, and seemed to us a friendly, non-delinquent college girl without a single nasty secret. Instead of Angelo Badalamenti's demented, finger-popping jazz, the ambient sound at the Salish Lodge was pulsing, shimmering New Age music. Without the leering music and the red-orange glow that saturate the interior scenes in "Twin Peaks," our meal was decidedly non-dreamy, illustrating the difference in mood that cinematic post-production effects can make.

The scene outside, by the falls, was another matter. These were the undiminished falls whose cascading sheets of water appear during the credits of "Twin Peaks"—a real-world spectacle as strange and overwhelming as anything in David Lynch's imagination. The water of the Snoqualmie River pours down two hundred and sixty-eight feet in white, hallucinogenic waves into a mist-shrouded aquamarine pool. Just above the falls, in 1898, the Puget Sound Power & Light Company built the first hydroelectric plant in the Pacific Northwest, after digging a shaft two hundred and seventy vertical feet through solid rock. (It was also the world's first completely underground electrical-generating plant.) Its turbines still invisibly produce twelve thousand kilowatts of power, and its unseen giant wheels, together with the naked fact of the roaring falls, gave us the truly Lynchian moment we had been looking for.

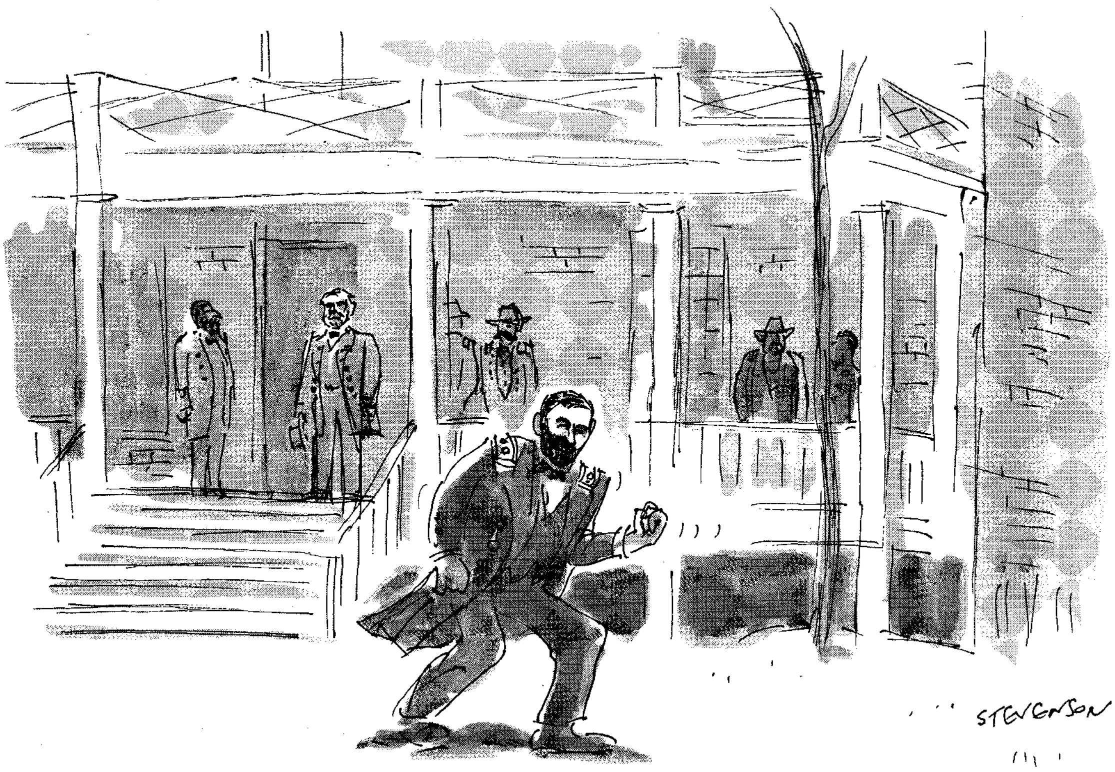
Royalty

A STAY-AT-HOME writes, of a different quest:

My first apartment in Manhattan was on West End Avenue near Seventy-second Street, or, as I soon came to think of it, about two blocks from Gray's Papaya, which is at Broadway and Seventy-second. My husband's office was around the corner from Papaya Kingdom, which was at Broadway and Fiftieth. My gym was down the street from Papaya King, which was on Eighty-sixth between Second and Third. My best friend lived near Papaya Prince, in the West Village. I spent a lot of my afternoons at the Mid-Manhattan branch of the public library, a few blocks from Papaya World. I can't remember exactly where Papaya Princess was, but I know I passed it now and then, in cabs. Before I moved to New York, four years ago, I hadn't had much contact with papayas. I knew they existed, and I saw them occasionally in supermarkets—stickered with their country of origin, like luggage—but they never figured greatly in my life. Now papayas were everywhere I was.

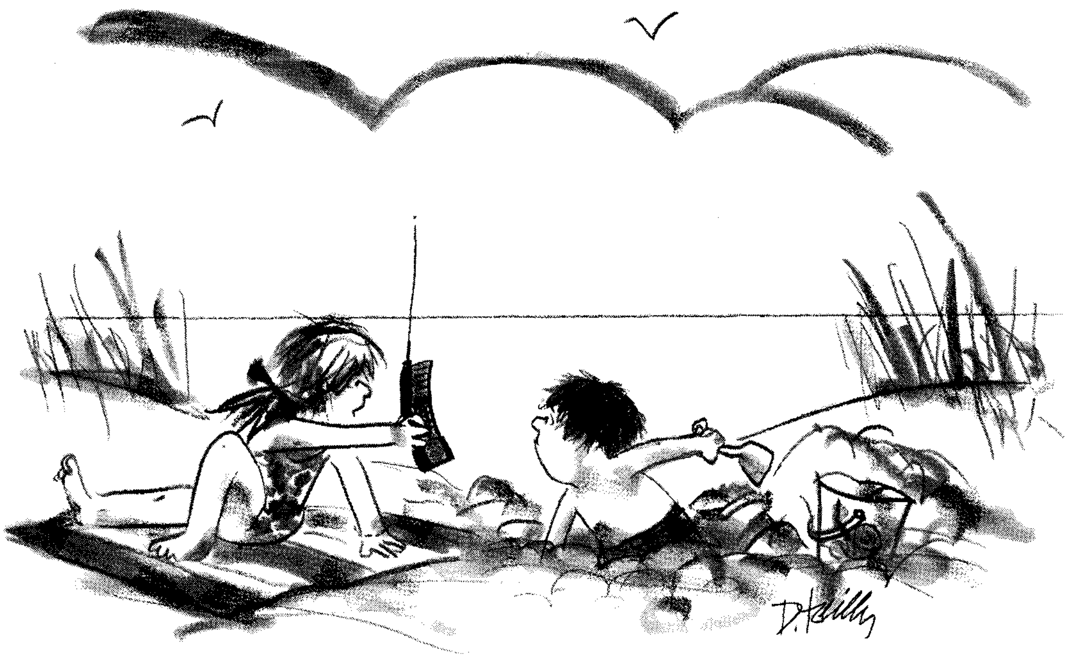
My preoccupation with papayas didn't hit me all at once. A few nagging questions only gradually turned into a full-scale fixation. It's not that I was especially interested in consuming papayas, which I think taste like a vague memory of something that tastes a lot stronger; it's that I grew increasingly determined to understand the phenomenology of papayas in New York. How did a tropical fruit come to be so prominent in a temperate-zone city? Why were there so *many* papaya stores? Why did all of them sell frankfurters, too? (I mean, were they health-food stores or junk-food stores?) Why did so many papaya stores include references to royalty in their names? Why were all of them decorated with signs using stilted, hyperbolic descriptions of papayas, like "THE ARISTOCRATIC MELON OF THE TROPICS," "THE FAMOUS MAGICAL PAPAYA MELON," and "GOD'S GIFT TO MANKIND IS OUR PAPAYA DRINK"? That nobody I knew could answer these questions, or had even considered them, came as no particular surprise; one characteristic of the New York personality I had noticed right away was an ability to overlook prevailing conditions, such as high taxes and sidewalk bridges. Papayas seemed to be just another prevailing condition.

I did what I could to get answers. I put questions to countermen at various papaya outposts, and got strangely specific but unsubstantiated reactions, among them "Eighty-five per cent of all people in the world love papaya" (the bun man at Papaya Kingdom) and "The relationship between the hot dog and the papaya is very good" (the juice man at Gray's). I also talked to Peter Poulos, the owner of Papaya King, which, I learned, was the original papaya store in New York. He



GENERAL U.S. GRANT DISPLAYS RARE EMOTION AT APPOMATTOX.

said that his father had travelled to Florida decades earlier and had come back fired up with the idea of introducing New Yorkers to the tropical delights of papaya juice. The outbreak of other papaya stores, he said, was an attempt to copy Papaya King's success. The romantic paeans to the papaya were his father's own words and cadence, and the other stores just duplicated them. The other stores' references to royalty were meant to fool customers into thinking that all the papaya stores were affiliated, like some tropical-fruit-juice House of Hapsburg.



"It's for you."

A few days after talking to Mr. Poulos, I came across a United States District Court opinion in a 1989 case involving Papaya King and Papaya Kingdom. The former had charged the latter with trademark infringement, on the ground that the papaya-plus-royalty name implied that the two businesses were associated. Papaya King had won. The owners of Papaya Kingdom then tried to satisfy the judgment by merely covering up the "K" on its sign with a piece of tape. Peter Leisure, the judge in the case, observed wryly that the defendant was "contented apparently to be known as 'Papaya ingdom.' " Less wryly, he imposed contempt charges on Papaya Kingdom—or, rather, Papaya ingdom: twenty-five thousand dollars in damages, seventy-five hundred for contempt of court, and more than thirteen thousand in attorneys' fees. I went down to Papaya ingdom a few days after reading the opinion to see whether the store had a new name and a new sign. It was gone, and a pizzeria had risen in its place.

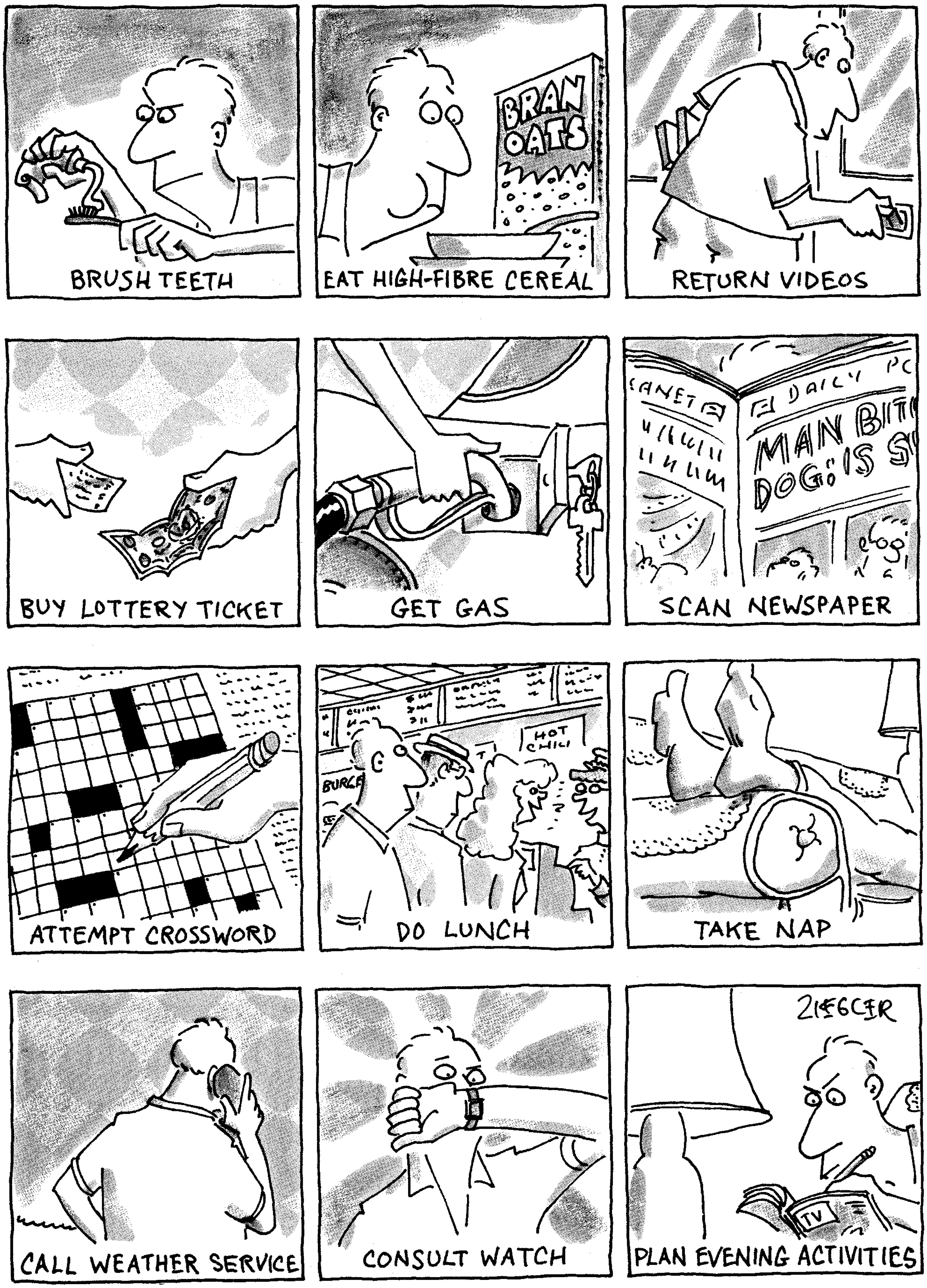
It was at about this time that I began to get used to living here: I knew uptown from downtown, and I had finally figured out that the guys in my parking garage were denting my car because I hadn't tipped them, and I had come to realize that there were certain things about the city that I would never understand. I wouldn't say I gave up; I simply started taking things in stride. This was when Gray's was selling its frankfurters for fifty cents (they're now sixty), and business was particularly brisk; I rarely passed by when a House O'Weenies truck wasn't double-parked by the door, offloading product. (I never saw anything like a House O'Tropical Fruits truck parked nearby, so I assumed that the papayas were delivered late at night—just the way you'd expect exotic cargo to arrive.) I still dropped in for a hot dog now and then, but I stopped pestering the countermen with questions about papayas. The crowd at Gray's was always the same peculiar mixture of panhandlers, with barely enough money for a Gray's special (two frankfurters and a papaya drink for two dollars), working people in a hurry, and one or two anxious-looking guys in suits. No one ever talked to anyone, and the radio was always blasting country music. I no longer drove myself crazy trying to figure out this combination of the tropics, street life, hot dogs, and Loretta Lynn. It had become a part of my neighborhood, period. In some ways, I felt relieved.

One day at Gray's, I ordered a hot dog and a small papaya—I had finally come around to drinking papaya juice—and got in line for the mustard, which was in a stout gallon jug with a plastic squirt top. The man behind me was skinny and bedraggled, and, in my best I'm-a-New Yorker-now style, I pretended he didn't exist. I certainly expected that, in keeping with the custom at Gray's, we wouldn't converse. As we waited for the mustard, though, he leaned over my shoulder and muttered to me, "It's going to blow up." I took a deep breath and looked away. "It's going to blow up," he repeated. I tried to look more explicitly uninterested. Garrulous strangers with the urge to share their apocalyptic visions appeared often enough in my day-to-day life so that I had got good at this; in fact, I took pride in staying unruffled. I was now just one person away from the mustard, and I planned to dress my dog quickly and find a place at the window far from the skinny man. He said it again, this time very distinctly: "Hey. It's. Going. To. Blow. *Up*."

It was my turn. I set my papaya juice down on the counter, positioned my hot dog under the nozzle, and pressed down hard on the top. It blew up. Mustard splattered all over my hands and my shirt. Most of the hot dog remained naked; the bun had a small mustard-filled crater, made by the impact. A plug of dried mustard that had caused the explosion was somewhere east of my papaya juice. "I *told* you it was going to blow up," the man said, shaking his head.

I looked at him and said apologetically, "I just moved here."

THE TWELVE LABORS OF HERCULES OF ELMHURST


BRUSH TEETH
BRAN OATS
EAT HIGH-FIBRE CEREAL
RETURN VIDEOS
BUY LOTTERY TICKET
GET GAS
DAILY
MAN BIT
DOG IS S
SCAN NEWSPAPER
ATTEMPT CROSSWORD
HOT CHILI
BURG
DO LUNCH
TAKE NAP
CALL WEATHER SERVICE
CONSULT WATCH
ZIEGLER
TV
PLAN EVENING ACTIVITIES

TV PEOPLE

IT was Sunday evening when the TV PEOPLE showed up.

The season, spring. At least, I think it was spring. In any case, it wasn't particularly hot as seasons go, not particularly chilly.

To be honest, the season's not so important. What matters is that it's a Sunday evening.

I don't like Sunday evenings. Or, rather, I don't like everything that goes with them—that Sunday-evening state of affairs. Without fail, come Sunday evening my head starts to ache. In varying intensity each time. Maybe a third to a half of an inch into my temples, the soft flesh throbs—as if invisible threads lead out and someone far off is yanking at the other ends. Not that it hurts so much. It ought to hurt, but, strangely, it doesn't—it's like long needles probing anesthetized areas.

And I hear things. Not sounds, but thick slabs of silence being dragged through the dark. *KRZSHAAAL KKRZSHAAAAAL KKKKRMMMS*. Those are the initial indications. First, the aching. Then, a slight distortion of my vision. Tides of confusion wash through, premonitions tugging at memories, memories tugging at premonitions. A finely honed razor moon floats white in the sky, roots of doubt burrow into the earth. People walk extra loud down the hall just to get me. *KRRSPUMK DUWB KRRSPUMK DUWB KRRSPUMK DUWB*.

All the more reason for the TV PEOPLE to single out Sunday evening as the time to come around. Like melancholy moods, or the secretive, quiet fall of rain, they steal into the gloom of that appointed time.

LET me explain how the TV PEOPLE look.

The TV PEOPLE are slightly smaller than you or me. Not obviously smaller—*slightly* smaller. About, say, twenty or thirty per cent. Every part of their bodies is uniformly smaller. So rather than "small" the more terminologically correct expression might be "reduced."

In fact, if you see TV PEOPLE somewhere, you might not notice at first that they're small. But even if you don't, they'll probably strike you as somehow strange. Unsettling, maybe. You're sure to think something's odd, and then you'll take another look. There's nothing unnatural about them at first glance, but that's what's so unnatural. Their smallness is completely different from that of children and dwarfs. When we see children, we *feel* they're small, but this sense of recognition comes mostly from the misproportioned awkwardness of their bodies. They are small, granted, but not uniformly so. The hands are small, but the head is big. Typically, that is. No, the smallness of TV PEOPLE is something else entirely. TV PEOPLE look as if they were reduced by photocopy, everything mechanically calibrated. Say their height has been reduced by a factor of 0.7, then their shoulder width is also in 0.7 reduction; ditto (0.7 reduction) for the feet, head, ears, and fingers. Like plastic models, only a little smaller than the real thing.

Or like perspective demos. Figures that look far away even close up. Something out of a trompe-l'oeil painting where the surface warps and buckles. An illusion where the hand fails to touch objects close by, yet brushes what is out of reach.

That's TV PEOPLE.

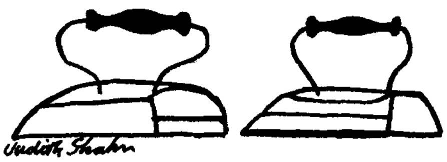
That's TV PEOPLE.

That's TV PEOPLE.

THERE were three of them altogether.

They don't knock or ring the doorbell. Don't say hello. They just sneak right in. I don't even hear a footstep. One opens the door, the other two carry in a TV. Not a very big TV. Your ordinary Sony color TV. The door was locked, I think, but I can't be certain. Maybe I forgot to lock it. It really wasn't foremost in my thoughts at the time, so who knows? Still, I think the door was locked.

When they come in, I'm lying on the sofa, gazing up at the ceiling. Nobody at home but me. That afternoon, the wife has gone out with the girls—some close friends from her high-school days—getting together to talk, then eating dinner out. "Can you grab your own supper?" the wife said before leaving. "There's vegetables in the fridge and all sorts of frozen foods. That much you can handle for yourself, can't you? And before the sun goes down, remember to take in the laundry, O.K.?"



Judith Shahn

"Sure thing," I said. Doesn't faze me a bit. Rice, right? Laundry, right? Nothing to it. Take care of it, simple as *SLUPPP KRRRTZ!*

"Did you say something, dear?" she asked.

"No, nothing," I said.

All afternoon I take it easy and loll around on the sofa. I have nothing better to do. I read a bit—that new novel by García Márquez—and listen to some music. I have myself a beer. Still, I'm unable to give my mind to any of this. I consider going back to bed, but I can't even pull myself together enough to do that. So I wind up lying on the sofa, staring at the ceiling.

The way my Sunday afternoons go, I end up doing a little bit of various things, none very well. It's a struggle to concentrate on any one thing. This particular day, everything seems to be going right. I think, Today I'll read this book, listen to these records, answer these letters. Today, for sure, I'll clean out my desk drawers, run errands, wash the car for once. But two o'clock rolls around, three o'clock rolls around, gradually dusk comes on, and all my plans are blown. I haven't done a thing; I've been lying around on the sofa the whole day, same as always. The clock ticks in my ears. *TRPP Q SCHAOUS TRPP Q SCHAOUS*. The sound erodes everything around me, little by little, like dripping rain. *TRPP Q SCHAOUS TRPP Q SCHAOUS*. Little by little, Sunday afternoon wears down, shrinking in scale. Just like the TV PEOPLE themselves.

THE TV PEOPLE ignore me from the very outset. All three of them have this look that says the likes of me don't exist. They open the door and carry in their TV. The two put the set on the sideboard, the other one plugs it in. There's a mantel clock and a stack of magazines on the sideboard. The clock was a wedding gift, big and heavy—big and heavy as time itself—with a loud sound, too. *TRPP Q SCHAOUS TRPP Q SCHAOUS*. All through the house you can hear it. The TV PEOPLE move it off the sideboard, down onto the floor. The wife's going to raise hell, I think. She hates it when things get randomly shifted about. If everything isn't in its proper place, she gets really sore. What's worse, with the clock there on the *floor, I'm bound to trip* over it in the middle of the night. I'm forever getting up to go to the toilet at two in the morning, bleary-eyed, *and stumbling* over something.

THE PERCH

There is a fork in a branch
of an ancient, enormous maple,
one of a grove of such trees,
where I go sometimes and sit and look out
over miles of valleys and low hills.
Today on skis I took a friend
to show her the trees. We set out
down the road, turned in at
the lane which a few weeks ago,
when the trees were almost empty
and the November snows had not yet come,
lay thickly covered in bright-red
and yellow leaves, crossed the swamp,
passed the cellar hole holding
the remains of the 1880 farmhouse
that slid down into it by stages
during the forties, followed
the overgrown logging road
to the trees. I climbed up
to the perch, and this time looked
not into the distance but at
the tree itself, its trunk
contorted by the terrible struggles
of that time when it had its hard time.
After the trauma it grows less solid.
It may be some such time now comes upon me.
It would have to do with the unaccomplished,
and with the attempted marriage
of solitude and happiness. Then a rifle
sounded, several times, quite loud,
from across the valley, percussions
of the custom of male mastery
over the earth—the most graceful,
most alert, most gentle of the animals
being chosen to die. I looked
to see if my friend had heard,
but she was stepping about on her skis,
studying the trees, smiling to herself,
her lips still filled, for all
we had drained them, with hundreds
and thousands of kisses. Just then
she looked up—the way, from low
to high, the god blesses—and the blue
of her eyes shone out of the black
and white of bark and snow, as lovers
who are walking on a freezing day
touch icy cheek to icy cheek,
kiss, then shudder to discover
the heat waiting inside their mouths.

—Galway Kinnell

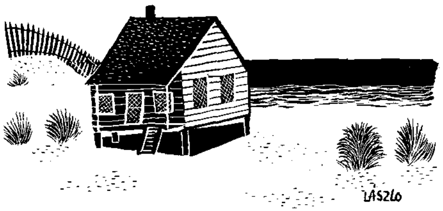
• •

Next, the TV PEOPLE move the magazines to the table. All of them women's magazines. (I hardly ever read magazines; I read books—personally, I wouldn't mind if every last magazine in the world went out of business.) *Elle* and *Marie Claire* and *Home Ideas*, magazines of that ilk. Neatly stacked on the sideboard. The wife doesn't like me touching her magazines—change the order of the stack, and I never hear the end of it—so I don't go near them. Never once flipped through them. But the TV PEOPLE couldn't care less: they move them right out of the way, they show no concern, they sweep the whole lot off the sideboard, they mix up the order. *Marie Claire* is on top of *Croissant; Home Ideas* is underneath *An-An*. Unforgivable. And worse, they're scattering the bookmarks onto the floor. They've lost her place, pages with important information. I have no idea what information or how important—might have been for work, might have been personal—but whatever, it was important to the wife, and she'll let me know about it. "What's the meaning of this? I go out for a nice time with friends, and when I come back the house is a shambles!" I can just hear it, line for line. Oh, great, I think, shaking my head.

EVERYTHING gets removed from the sideboard to make room for the television. The TV PEOPLE plug it into a wall socket, then switch it on. Then there is a tinkling noise, and the screen lights up. A moment later the picture floats into view. They change the channels by remote control. But all the channels are blank—probably, I think, because they haven't connected the set to an antenna. There has to be an antenna outlet somewhere in the apartment. I seem to remember the superintendent telling us where it was when we moved into this condominium. All you had to do was connect it. But I can't remember where it is. We don't own a television, so I've completely forgotten.

Yet somehow the TV PEOPLE don't seem bothered that they aren't picking up any broadcast. They give no sign of looking for the antenna outlet. Blank screen, no image—makes no difference to them. Having pushed the button and had the power come on, they've completed what they came to do.

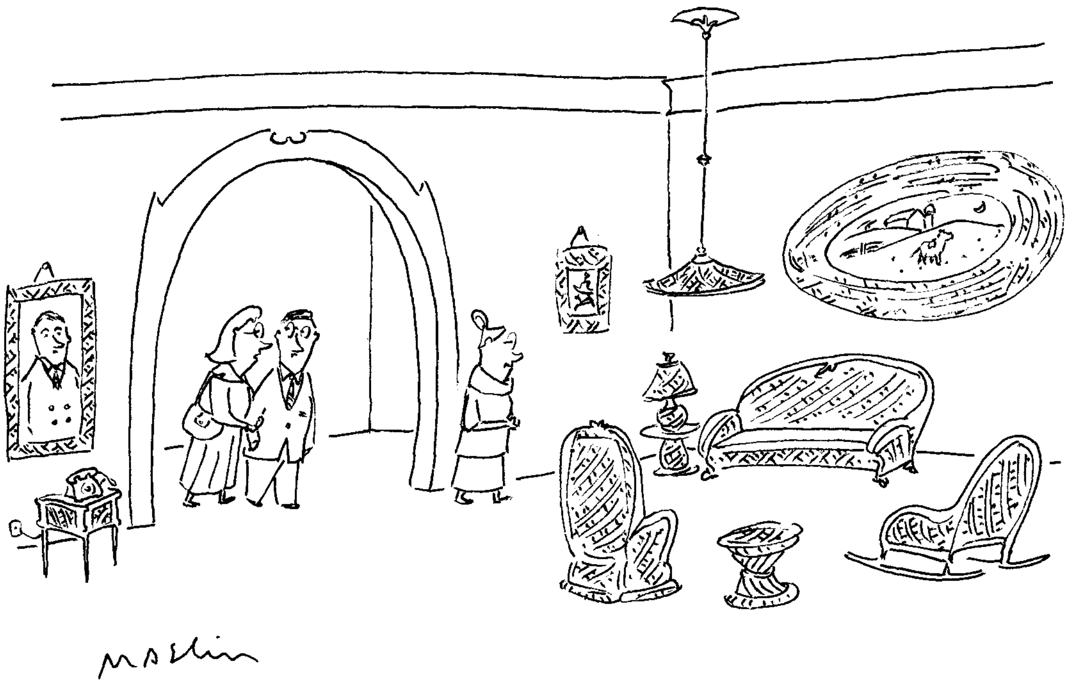
The TV is brand-new. It's not in its box, but one look tells you it's new. The instruction manual and guarantee are in a plastic bag taped to the side; the power cable shines, sleek as a freshly caught fish.



All three TV PEOPLE look at the blank screen from here and there around the room. One of them comes over next to me and verifies that you can see the TV screen from where I'm sitting. The TV is facing straight toward me, at an optimum viewing distance. They seem satisfied. One operation down, says their air of accomplishment. One of the TV PEOPLE (the one who'd come over next to me) places the remote control on the table.

The TV PEOPLE speak not a word. Their movements come off in perfect order, hence they don't need to speak. Each of the three executes his prescribed function with maximum efficiency. A professional job. Neat and clean. Their work is done in no time. As an afterthought, one of the TV PEOPLE picks the clock up from the floor and casts a quick glance around the room to see if there isn't a more appropriate place to put it, but he doesn't find any and sets it back down. *TRPP Q SCHAOUS TRPP Q SCHAOUS*. It goes on ticking weightily on the floor. Our apartment is rather small, and a lot of floor space tends to be taken up with my books and the wife's reference materials. I am bound to trip on that clock. I heave a sigh. No mistake, stub my toes for sure. You can bet on it.

All three TV PEOPLE wear dark-blue jackets. Of who-knows-what fabric, but slick. Under them, they wear jeans and tennis shoes. Clothes and shoes all proportionately reduced in size. I watch their activities for the longest time, until I start to think maybe it's *my* proportions that are off. Almost as if I were riding backward on a roller coaster, wearing strong prescription glasses. The view is dizzying, the scale all screwed up. I'm thrown off balance, my customary world is no longer absolute. That's the way the TV PEOPLE make you feel.



"If you can't say anything nice about rattan, don't say anything at all."

• •

Up to the very last, the TV PEOPLE don't say a word. The three of them check the screen one more time, confirm that there are no problems, then switch it off by remote control. The glow contracts to a point and flickers off with a tinkling noise. The screen returns to its expressionless, gray, natural state. The world outside is getting dark. I hear someone calling out to someone else. Anonymous footsteps pass by down the hall, intentionally loud as ever. *KRRSPUMK DUWB KRRSPUMK DUWB*. A Sunday evening.

The TV PEOPLE give the room another whirlwind inspection, open the door, and leave. Once again, they pay no attention to me whatsoever. They act as if I don't exist.

FROM the time the TV PEOPLE come into the apartment to the moment they leave, I don't budge. Don't say a word. I remain motionless, stretched out on the sofa, surveying the whole operation. I know what you're going to say: that's unnatural. Total strangers—not one but three—walk unannounced right into your apartment, plunk down a TV set, and you just sit there staring at them, dumbfounded. Kind of odd, don't you think?

I know, I know. But, for whatever reason, I don't speak up, I simply observe the proceedings. Because they ignore me so totally. And if you were in my position I imagine you'd do the same. Not to excuse myself, but *you* have people right in front of you denying your very presence like that, then see if you don't doubt whether you actually exist. I look at my hands half expecting to see clear through them. I'm devastated, powerless, in a trance. My body, my mind are vanishing fast. I can't bring myself to move. It's all I can do to watch the three TV PEOPLE deposit their television in my apartment and leave. I can't open my mouth for fear of what my voice might sound like.

The TV PEOPLE exit and leave me alone. My sense of reality comes back to me. These hands are once again my hands. It's only then I notice that the dusk has been swallowed by darkness. I turn on the light. Then I close my eyes. Yes, that's a TV set sitting there. Meanwhile, the clock keeps ticking away the minutes. *TRPP Q SCHAOUS TRPP Q SCHAOUS*.

CURIOUSLY, the wife makes no mention of the appearance of the television set in the apartment. No reaction at all. Zero. It's as if she doesn't even see it. Creepy. Because, as I said before, she's extremely fussy about the order and arrangement of furniture and other things. If someone dares to move anything in the apartment, even by a hair, she'll jump on it in an instant. That's her ascendancy. She knits her brows, then gets things back the way they were.

Not me. If an issue of *Home Ideas* gets put under an *An-An*, or a ballpoint pen finds its way into the pencil stand, you don't see me go to pieces. I don't even notice. This is her problem; I'd wear myself out living like her. Sometimes she flies into a rage. She tells me she can't abide my carelessness. Yes, I say, and sometimes I can't stand carelessness about universal gravitation and π and $E=mc^2$ either. I mean it. But when I say things like this she clams up, taking them as a personal insult. I never mean it that way; I just say what I feel.

That night, when she comes home, first thing she does is look around the apartment. I've readied a full explanation—how the TV PEOPLE came and mixed everything up. It'll be difficult to convince her, but I intend to tell her the whole truth.

She doesn't say a thing, just gives the place the once-over. There's a TV on the sideboard, the magazines are out of order on the table, the mantel clock is on the floor, and the wife doesn't even comment. There's nothing for me to explain.

"You get your own supper O.K.?" she asks me, undressing.

"No, I didn't eat," I tell her.

"Why not?"

"I wasn't really hungry," I say.

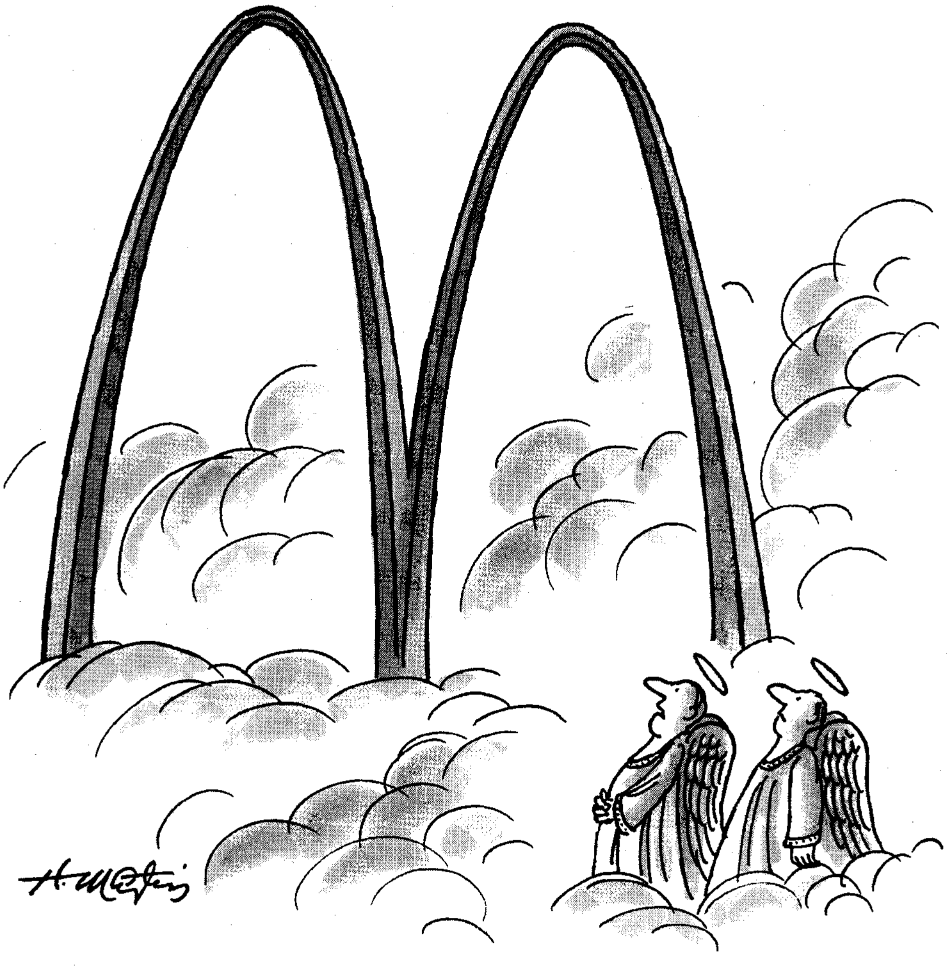
The wife pauses, half undressed, and thinks this over. She gives me a long look. Should she press the subject or not? The clock breaks up the protracted, ponderous silence. *TRPP Q SCHAOUS TRPP Q SCHAOUS.* I pretend not to hear; I won't let it in my ears. But the sound is simply too heavy, too loud to shut out. She, too, seems to be listening to it. Then she shakes her head and says, "Shall I whip up something quick?"

"Well, maybe," I say. I don't really feel much like eating, but I won't turn down the offer.

The wife changes into around-the-house wear and goes to the kitchen to fix *zosui* and *tamago-yaki* while filling me in on her friends. Who'd done what, who'd said what, who'd changed her hair style and looked so much younger, who'd broken up with her boyfriend. I know most of her friends, so I pour myself a beer and follow along, inserting attentive uh-huhs at proper intervals. Though in fact I hardly hear a thing she says. I'm thinking about the TV PEOPLE. That, and why she didn't remark on the sudden appearance of the television. No way she couldn't have noticed. Very odd. Weird, even. Something is wrong here. But what to do about it?

The food is ready, so I sit at the dining-room table and eat. Rice, egg, salt plum. When I've finished, the wife clears away the dishes. I have another beer, and she has a beer, too. I glance at the sideboard, and there's the TV set, with the power off, the remote-control unit sitting on the table. I get up from the table, reach for the remote control, and switch it on. The screen glows and I hear it tinkling. Still no picture. Only the same blank tube. I press the button to raise the volume, but all that does is increase the white-noise roar. I watch the snowstorm for twenty, thirty seconds, then switch it off. Light and sound vanish in an instant. Meanwhile, the wife has seated herself on the carpet and is flipping through *Elle*, oblivious of the fact that the TV has just been turned on and off.

I replace the remote control on the table and sit down on the sofa again, thinking I'll go on reading that long García Márquez novel. I always read after dinner. I might set the book down after thirty minutes, or I might read for two hours, but the thing is to read every day. Today, though, I can't get myself to read more than a page and a half. I can't concentrate; my thoughts keep returning to the TV set. I look up and see it, right in front of me.



"I always thought the heavenly gates would be pearly, not golden."

I WAKE at half past two in the morning to find the TV still there. I get out of bed half hoping the thing has disappeared. No such luck. I go to the toilet, then plop down on the sofa and put my feet up on the table. I take the remote control in hand and try turning on the TV. No new developments in that department either; only a rerun of the same glow and noise. Nothing else. I look at it awhile, then switch it off.

I go back to bed and try to sleep. I'm dead tired, but sleep isn't coming. I shut my eyes and I see them. The TV PEOPLE carrying the TV set, the TV PEOPLE moving the clock out of the way, the TV PEOPLE transferring magazines to the table, the TV PEOPLE plugging the power cable into the wall socket, the TV PEOPLE checking the screen, the TV PEOPLE opening the door and silently exiting. They've stayed on in my head. They're in there walking around. I get back out of bed, go to the kitchen, and pour a double brandy into a coffee cup. I down the brandy and head over to the sofa for another session with Márquez. I open the pages, yet somehow the words won't sink in. The writing is opaque.

Very well, then, I throw García Márquez aside and pick up *Elle*. Reading *Elle* from time to time can't hurt anyone. But there isn't anything in *Elle* that catches my fancy. New hair styles and elegant white silk blouses and eateries that serve good beef stew and what to wear to the opera, articles like that. Do I care? I throw *Elle* aside. Which leaves me the television on the sideboard to look at.

I end up staying awake until dawn,

not doing a thing. At six o'clock, I make myself some coffee. I don't have anything else to do, so I go ahead and fix ham sandwiches before the wife gets up.

"You're up awful early," she says drowsily.

"Mm," I mumble.

After a nearly wordless breakfast, we leave home together, and go our separate ways to our respective offices. The wife works at a small publishing house. Edits a natural-food and life-style magazine. "Shiitake Mushrooms Prevent Gout," "The Future of Organic Farming," you know the kind of magazine. Never sells very well, but hardly costs anything to produce; kept afloat by a handful of zealots. Me, I work in the advertising department of an electrical-appliance manufacturer. I dream up ads for toasters and washing machines and microwave ovens.

Thirty-fourth and Lexington? We're gonna have to go through Connecticut.
Great!
THE LAST OF THE PASSENGER PIGEONS

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IN my office building, I pass one of the TV PEOPLE on the stairs. If I'm not mistaken, it's one of the three who brought the TV the day before—probably the one who first opened the door, who didn't actually carry the set. Their singular lack of distinguishing features makes it next to impossible to tell them apart, so I can't swear to it, but I'd say I'm eight to nine out of ten on the mark. He's wearing the same blue jacket he had on the previous day, and he's not carrying anything in his hands. He's merely walking down the stairs. I'm walking up. I dislike elevators, so I generally take the stairs. My office is on the ninth floor, so this is no mean feat. When I'm in a rush I get all sweaty by the time I reach the top. Even so, getting sweaty has got to be better than taking the elevator, as far as I'm concerned. Everyone jokes about it: doesn't own a TV or a VCR, doesn't take elevators, must be a modern-day Luddite. Maybe a childhood trauma leading to arrested development. Let them think what they like. They're the ones who are screwed up, if you ask me.

In any case, there I am, climbing the stairs as always; I'm the only one on the stairs—almost nobody else uses them—when between the fourth and fifth floors I pass one of the TV PEOPLE coming down. It happens so suddenly I don't know what to do. Maybe I should say something?

But I don't say anything. I don't know what to say, and he's unapproachable. He leaves no opening; he descends the stairs so functionally, at one set tempo, with such regulated precision. Plus, he utterly ignores my presence, same as the day before. I don't even enter his field of vision. He slips by before I can think what to do. In that instant, the field of gravity warps.

At work the day is solid with meetings from the morning on. Important meetings on sales campaigns for a new product line. Several employees read reports. Blackboards fill with figures, bar graphs proliferate on computer screens. Heated discussions. I participate, although my contribution to the meetings is not that critical because I'm not directly involved with the project. So between meetings I keep puzzling things over. I voice an opinion only once. Isn't much of an opinion, either—something perfectly obvious to any observer—but I couldn't very well go without saying anything, after all. I may not be terribly ambitious when it comes to work, but so long as I'm receiving a salary I have to demonstrate responsibility. I summarize the various opinions up to that point and even make a joke to lighten the atmosphere. Half covering for my daydreaming about the TV PEOPLE. Several people laugh. After that one utterance, however, I only pretend to review the materials; I'm thinking about the TV PEOPLE. If they talk up a name for the new microwave oven, I certainly am not aware of it. My mind is all TV PEOPLE. What the hell was the meaning of that TV set? And why haul the TV all the way to my apartment in the first place? Why hasn't the wife remarked on its appearance? Why have the TV PEOPLE made inroads into my company?

The meetings are endless. At noon there's a short break for lunch. Too short to go out and eat. Instead, everyone gets sandwiches and coffee. The conference room is a haze of cigarette smoke, so I eat at my own desk. While I'm eating, the Section Chief comes around. To be perfectly frank, I don't like the guy. For no reason I can put my finger on: there's nothing you can fault him on, no single target for attack. He has an air of breeding. Moreover, he's not stupid. He has good taste in neckties, he doesn't wave his own flag or lord it over his inferiors. He even looks out for me, invites me out for the occasional meal. But there's just something about the guy that doesn't sit well with me. Maybe it's his habit of coming into body contact with people he's talking to. Men or women, at some point in the course of the conversation he'll reach out a hand and touch. Not in any suggestive way, mind you. No, his manner is brisk, his bearing perfectly casual. I wouldn't be surprised if some people don't even notice, it's so natural. Still —I don't know why—it does bother me. So whenever I see him, almost instinctively I brace myself. Call it petty, it gets to me.

He leans over, placing a hand on my shoulder. "About your statement at the meeting just now. Very nice," says the Section Chief warmly. "Very simply put, very pivotal. I was impressed. Points well taken. The whole room buzzed at that statement of yours. The timing was perfect, too. Yessir, you keep 'em coming like that."

And he glides off. Probably to lunch. I thank him straight out, but the honest truth is I'm taken aback. I mean, I don't remember a thing of what I said at the meeting. Why does the Section Chief have to come all the way over to my desk to praise me for *that*? There have to be more brilliant examples of *Homo loquens* around here. Strange. I go on eating my lunch, uncomprehending. Then I think about the wife. Wonder what she's up to right now. Out to lunch? Maybe I ought to give her a call, exchange a few words, anything. I dial the first three digits, have second thoughts, hang up. I have no reason to be calling her. My world may be crumbling, out of balance, but is that a reason to ring up her office? What can I say about all this anyway? Besides, I hate calling her at work. I set down the receiver, let out a sigh, and finish off my coffee. Then I toss the Styrofoam cup into the wastebasket.

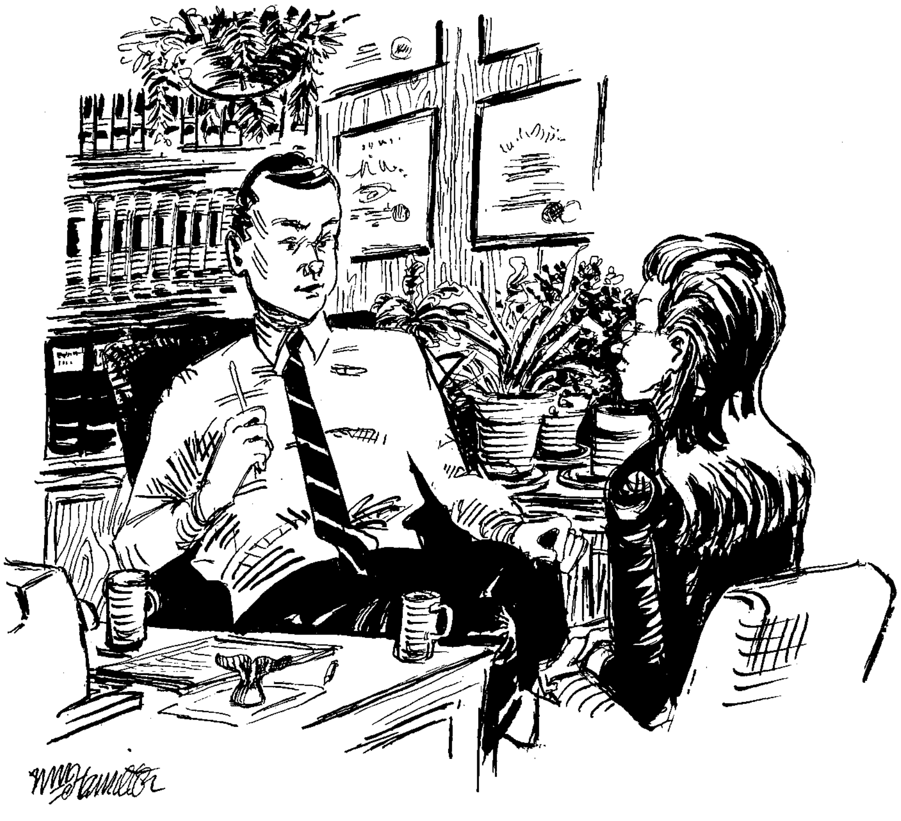
AT one of the afternoon meetings I see TV PEOPLE again. This time, their number has increased by two. Just as on the previous day, they come traipsing across the conference room, carrying a Sony color TV. A model one size bigger. Uh-oh. Sony's the rival camp. If, for whatever reason, any competitor's product gets brought into our offices, there's hell to pay, barring when other manufacturers' products are brought in for test comparison, of course. But then we take pains to remove the company logo—just to make sure no outside eyes happen upon it. Little do the TV PEOPLE care: the Sony mark is emblazoned for all to see. They open the door and march right into the conference room, flashing it in our direction. Then they parade the thing around the room, scanning the place for somewhere to set it down, until at last, not finding any location, they carry it backward out the door. The others in the room show no reaction to the TV PEOPLE. And they can't have missed them. No, they've definitely seen them. And the proof is they even got out of the way, clearing a path for the TV PEOPLE to carry their television through. Still, that's as far as it went: a reaction no more alarmed than when the nearby coffee shop delivered. They'd made it a ground rule not to acknowledge the presence of the TV PEOPLE. The others all knew they were there; they just acted as if they weren't.

None of it makes any sense. Does everybody know about the TV PEOPLE? Am I alone in the dark? Maybe the wife knew about the TV PEOPLE all along, too. Probably. I'll bet that's why she wasn't surprised by the television and why she didn't mention it. That's the only possible explanation. Yet this confuses me even more. Who or what, then, are the TV PEOPLE? And why are they always carrying around TV sets?

One colleague leaves his seat to go to the toilet, and I get up to follow. This is a guy who entered the company around the same time I did. We're on good terms. Sometimes we go out for a drink together after work. I don't do that with most people. I'm standing next to him at the urinals. He's the first to complain. "Oh, joy! Looks like we're in for more of the same, straight through to evening. I swear! Meetings, meetings, meetings, going to drag on forever."

"You can say that again," I say. We wash our hands. He compliments me on the morning meeting's statement. I thank him.

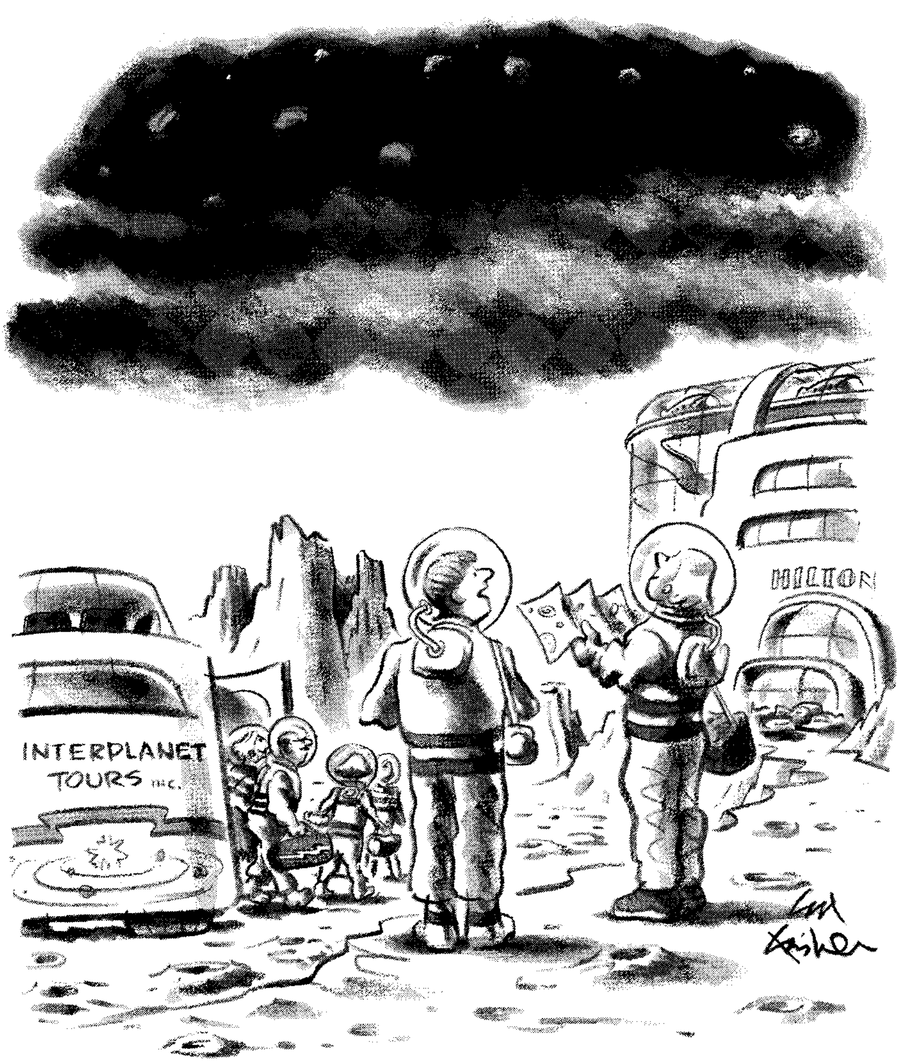
"Oh, by the way, those guys who



"May I ask you, Miss Howre, what made you select a homeopathic attorney?"

came in with the TV just now . . ." I launch forth, then cut off.

He doesn't say anything. He turns off the faucet, pulls two paper towels from the dispenser, and wipes his hands. He doesn't even shoot a glance in my direction. How long can he keep drying his hands? Eventually, he crumples up his towels and throws them away. Maybe he didn't hear me. Or maybe he's pretending not to hear. I can't tell. But from the sudden strain in the atmosphere I know enough not to ask. I shut up, wipe my hands, and walk down the corridor to the conference room. The rest of the afternoon's meetings he avoids my eyes.



"If there are sixteen moons, it must be Jupiter."

WHEN I get home from work, the apartment is dark. Outside, dark clouds have swept in. It's beginning to rain. The apartment smells like rain. Night is coming on. No sign of the wife. I loosen my tie, smooth out the wrinkles, and hang it up. I brush off my suit. I toss my shirt into the washing machine. My hair smells like cigarette smoke, so I take a shower and shave. Story of my life: I go to endless meetings, get smoked to death, then the wife gets on my case about it. The very first thing she did after we were married was make me stop smoking. Four years ago, that was.

Out of the shower, I sit on the sofa with a beer, drying my hair with a towel. The TV PEOPLE's television is still sitting on the sideboard. I pick up the remote control from the table and push the on switch. Again and again I press, but nothing happens. The screen stays dark. I check the plug; it's in the socket all right. I unplug it, then plug it back in. Still no go. No matter how often I press the on switch, the screen does not glow. Just to be sure, I pry open the back cover of the remote-control unit, remove the batteries, and check them with my handy electrical-contact tester. The batteries are fine. At this point, I give up, throw the remote control aside, and slosh down more beer.

Why should it upset me? Supposing the TV did come on, what then? It would glow and crackle with white noise. Who cares, if that's all that'd come on?

I care. Last night it worked. And I haven't laid a finger on it since. Doesn't make sense.

I try the remote control one more time. I press slowly with my finger. But the result is the same. No response whatsoever. The screen is dead. Cold.

Dead cold.

I pull another beer out of the fridge and eat some potato salad from a plastic tub. It's past six o'clock. I read the whole evening paper. If anything, it's more boring than usual. Almost no article worth reading, nothing but inconsequential news items. But I keep reading, for lack of anything better to do. Until I finish the paper. What next? To avoid pursuing that thought any further, I dally over the newspaper. Hmm, how about answering letters? A cousin of mine has sent us a wedding invitation, which I have to turn down. The day of the wedding, the wife and I are going to be off on a trip. To Okinawa. We've been planning it for ages; we're both taking time off from work. We can't very well go changing our plans now. God only knows when we'll get the next chance to spend a long holiday together. And, to clinch it all, I'm not even that close to my cousin; haven't seen her in almost ten years. Still, I can't leave replying to the last minute. She has to know how many people are coming, how many settings to plan for the banquet. Oh, forget it. I can't bring myself to write, not now. My heart isn't in it.

I pick up the newspaper again and read the same articles over again. Maybe I ought to start preparing dinner. But the wife might be working late and could come home having eaten. Which would mean wasting one portion. And if I am going to eat alone I can make do with leftovers; no reason to make something up special. If she hasn't eaten, we can go out and eat together.

Odd, though. Whenever either of us knows he or she is going to be later than six, we always call in. That's the rule. Leave a message on the answering machine if necessary. That way, the other can coördinate: go ahead and eat alone, or set something out for the late arriver, or hit the sack. The nature of my work sometimes keeps me out late, and she often has meetings, or proofs to dispatch, before coming home. Neither of us has a regular nine-to-five job. When both of us are busy, we can go three days without a word to each other. Those are the breaks—just one of those things that nobody planned. Hence we always keep certain rules, so as not to place unrealistic burdens on each other. If it looks as though we're going to be late, we call in and let the other one know. I sometimes forget, but she, never once.

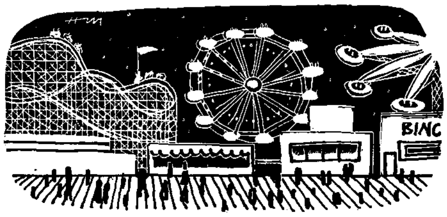
Still, there's no message on the answering machine.

I toss the newspaper, stretch out on the sofa, and shut my eyes.

I DREAM about a meeting. I'm standing up, delivering a statement I myself don't understand. I open my mouth and talk. If I don't, I'm a dead man. I have to keep talking. Have to keep coming out with endless blah-blah-blah. Everyone around me is dead. Dead and turned to stone. A roomful of stone statues. A wind is blowing. The windows are all broken; gusts of air are coming in. And the TV PEOPLE are here. Three of them. Like the first time. They're carrying a Sony color TV. And on the screen are the TV PEOPLE. I'm running out of words; little by little I can feel my fingertips growing stiffer. Gradually turning to stone.

I open my eyes to find the room aglow. The color of corridors at the Aquarium. The television is on. Outside, everything is dark. The TV screen is flickering in the gloom, static crackling. I sit up on the sofa, and press my temples with my fingertips. The flesh of my fingers is still soft; my mouth tastes like beer. I swallow. I'm dried out; the saliva catches in my throat. As always, the waking world pales after an all too real dream. But no, this is real. Nobody's turned to stone. What time is it getting to be? I look for the clock on the floor. *TRPP Q SCHAOUS TRPP Q SCHAOUS.* A little before eight.

Yet, just as in the dream, one of the TV PEOPLE is on the television screen. The same guy I passed on the stairs to the office. No mistake. The one who first opened the door to the apartment. I'm one hundred per cent sure. He stands there—against a bright, fluorescent white background, the tail end of a dream infiltrating my conscious reality—staring at me. I shut, then reopen my eyes, hoping he'll have slipped back to never-never land. But he doesn't disappear. Far from it. He gets bigger. His face fills the whole screen, getting closer and closer.



The next thing I know, he's stepping through the screen. Hands gripping the frame, lifting himself up and over, one foot after the other, like climbing out of a window, leaving a white TV screen glowing behind him.

He rubs his left hand in the palm of his right, slowly acclimating himself to the world outside the television. On and on, reduced right-hand fingers rubbing reduced left-hand fingers, no hurry. He has that all-the-time-in-the-world nonchalance. Like a veteran TV-show host. Then he looks me in the face.

THE INFLUENZAS

The last of the epidemics bore him
Specially away, a favorite
Son of their group
In that he had taken such care with them,
Always being sick;
The illnesses came as a knock
Regular at the door,
And his invitation,
Which might have seemed tired from another—
Please come in—
Was full of the ready enthusiasm
For which he was known in all things,
And always the wink of mischief in melodrama:
Always the big show,
Hunching his shoulders
That his wife should not see.
Keeping him quiet and in socks, illness
And its children over the years
Made a second home here,
In him,
At the dinner table
Behind his eyes, sitting
In the most comfortable chair
This withdrawing room in his face had to offer,
Filled drinks always in hand.
This man was a comfort in his manners—
Even disease could see this,
So that when he left he went
Voluntarily, all intentions honest:
Out there tonight the party for him was to be
Very good, and to be there without him now
Would be unbearable.
With his hat, his heavy coat,
Walking that way he walked
When he was quiet in his socks,
Hunching his shoulders so that his wife
Again should not see
Him, with his friends he went drinking
The hundred good glasses of very cold beer.

—ALBERTO RÍOS

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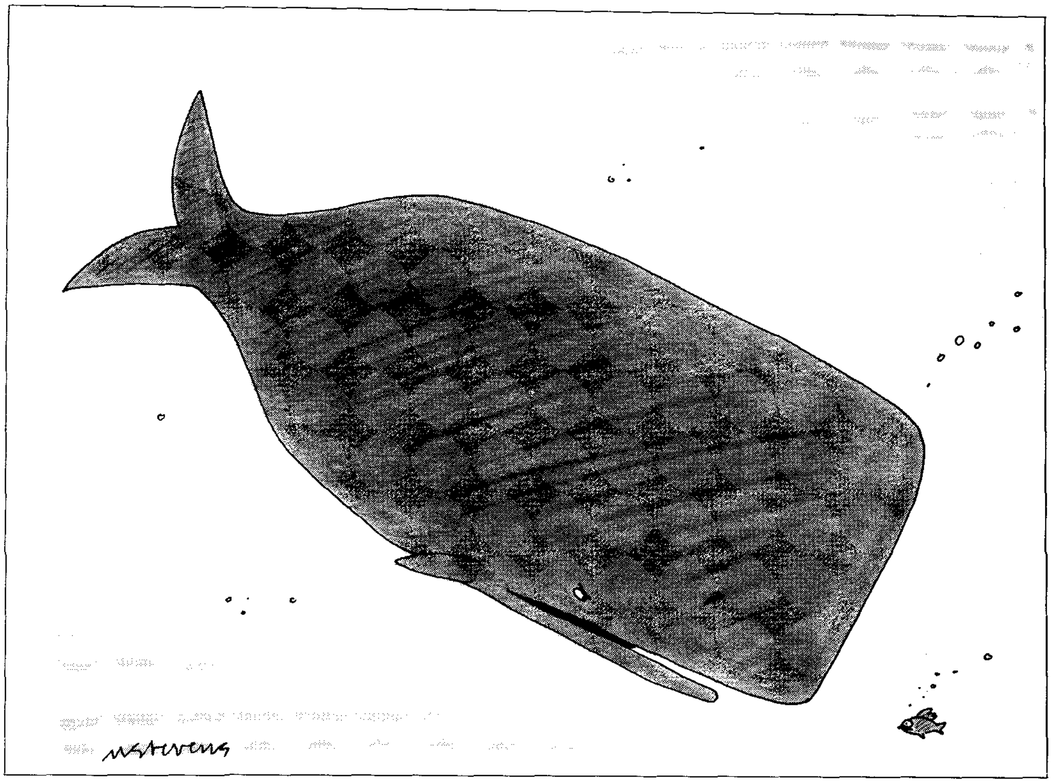


"Don't make waves."

"We're making an airplane," says my TV PEOPLE visitant. His voice has no perspective to it. A curious, paper-thin voice.

He speaks, and the screen is all machinery. Very professional fade-in. Just like on the news. First, there's an opening shot of a large factory interior, then it cuts to a closeup of the workspace, camera center. Two TV PEOPLE are hard at work on some machine, tightening bolts with wrenches, adjusting gauges. The picture of concentration. The machine, however, is unlike anything I've ever seen: an upright cylinder except that it narrows toward the top, with streamlined protrusions along its surface. Looks more like some kind of gigantic orange juicer than an airplane. No wings, no seats.

"Doesn't look like an airplane," I say. Doesn't sound like my voice either. Strangely brittle, as if the nutrients had been strained out through a thick filter. Have I grown so old all of a sudden?

"That's probably because we haven't painted it yet," he says. "Tomorrow we'll have it the right color. Then you'll see it's an airplane."

"The color's not the problem. It's the shape. That's not an airplane."

"Well, if it's not an airplane, what is it?" he asks me. If he doesn't know, and I don't know, then what *is* it?

"So, that's why it's got to be the color." The TV PEOPLE rep puts it to me gently. "Paint it the right color, and it'll be an airplane."

I don't feel like arguing. What difference does it make? Orange juicer or airplane—flying orange juicer?—what do I care? Still, where's the wife while all this is happening? Why doesn't she come home? I massage my temples again. The clock ticks on. *TRPP Q SCHAOUS TRPP Q SCHAOUS.* The remote control lies on the table, and next to it the stack of women's magazines. The telephone is silent, the room illuminated by the dim glow of the television.

The two TV PEOPLE on the screen keep working away. The image is much clearer than before. You can read the numbers on the dials, hear the faint rumble of machinery. *TAABZHRAYBGG TAABZHRAYBGG ARP ARRP TAABZHRAYBGG.* This bass line is punctuated periodically by a sharp, metallic grating. *AREEEENBT AREEENBT.* And various other noises are interspersed through the remaining aural space; I can't hear anything clearly over them. Still, the two TV PEOPLE labor on for all they're worth. That, apparently, is the subject of this program. I go on watching the two of them as they work on and on. Their colleague outside the TV set also looks on in silence. At them. At that *thing*—for the life of me, it does not look like an airplane—that insane machine all black and grimy, floating in a field of white light.

The TV PEOPLE rep speaks up. "Shame about your wife."

I look him in the face. Maybe I didn't hear him right. Staring at him is like peering into the glowing tube itself.

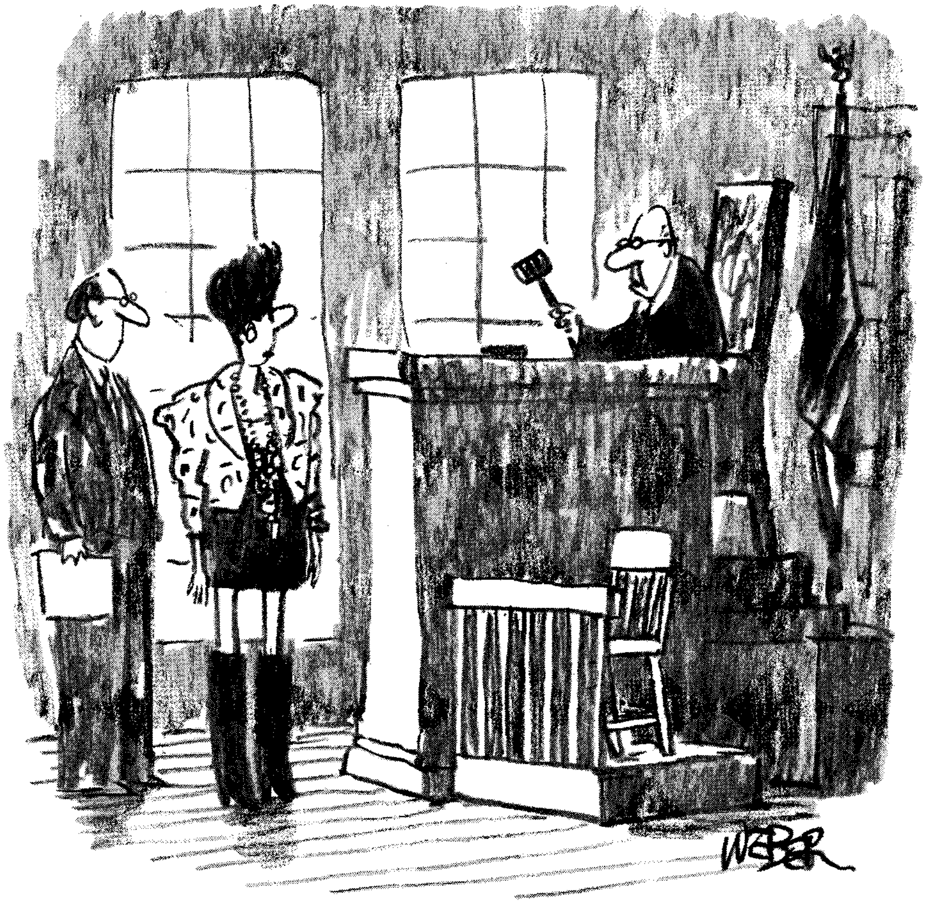
"Shame about your wife," the TV PEOPLE rep repeats in exactly the same absent tone.

"How's that?" I ask.

"How's that? It's gone too far," says the TV PEOPLE rep in a voice like a plastic-card hotel key. Flat, uninflected, it slices into me as if it were sliding through a thin slit. "It's gone too far: she's out there."

"*It's gone too far: she's out there,*" I repeat in my head. Very plain, and without reality. I can't grasp the context. Cause has effect by the tail and is about to swallow it whole. I get up and go to the kitchen. I open the refrigerator, take a deep breath, reach for a can of beer, and go back to the sofa. The TV PEOPLE rep stands in place in front of the television, right elbow resting on the set, and watches me extract the pull ring. I don't really want to drink beer at this moment; I just need to do something. I drink one sip, but the beer doesn't taste good. I hold the can in my hand dumbly until it becomes so heavy I have to set it down on the table.

Then I think about the TV PEOPLE rep's revelation, about the wife's failure to materialize. He's saying she's gone. That she isn't coming home. I can't bring myself to believe it's over. Sure, we're not the perfect couple. In four years, we've had our spats; we have our little problems. But we always talk



"For having made, on impulse, the following purchases—at Bergdorf Goodman, one silk jacquard running suit in beige, one faux-gold-studded black calf bomber jacket, and one pair of gunmetal lizard ankle boots; at Martha, one flower-appliquéd shantung chemise and beaded-velvet black stirrup pants; at Barneys, one brocaded fuchsia clutch with tasselled shoulder strap—I find you guilty as charged."

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them out. There are things we've resolved and things we haven't. Most of what we couldn't resolve we let ride. O.K., so we have our ups and downs as a couple. I admit it. But is this cause for despair? C'mon, show me a couple who don't have problems. Besides, it's only a little past eight. There must be some reason she can't get to a phone. Any number of possible reasons. For instance . . . I can't think of a single one. I'm hopelessly confused.

I fall back deep into the sofa.

How on earth is that airplane—if it is an airplane—supposed to fly? What propels it? Where are the windows? Which is the front, which is the back?

I'm dead tired. Exhausted. I still have to write that letter, though, to beg off from my cousin's invitation. My work schedule does not afford me the pleasure of attending. Regrettable. Congratulations, all the same.

The two TV PEOPLE in the television continue building their airplane, oblivious of me. They toil away; they don't stop for anything. They have an infinite amount of work to get through before the machine is complete. No sooner have they finished one operation than they're busy with another. They have no assembly instructions, no plans, but they know precisely what to do and what comes next. The camera ably follows their deft motions. Clear-cut, easy-to-follow camera work. Highly credible, convincing images. No doubt other TV PEOPLE (Nos. 4 and 5?) are manning the camera and control panel.

Strange as it may sound, the more I watch the flawless form of the TV PEOPLE as they go about their work, the more the thing starts to look like an airplane. At least, it'd no longer surprise me if it actually flew. What does it matter which is front or back? With all the exacting detail work they're putting in, it *has* to be an airplane. Even if it doesn't appear so—to them, it's an airplane. Just as the little guy said, "*If it's not an airplane, then what is it?*"

The TV PEOPLE rep hasn't so much as twitched in all this time. Right elbow still propped up on the TV set, he's watching me. I'm being watched. The TV PEOPLE factory crew keeps working. Busy, busy, busy. The clock ticks on. *TRPP Q SCHAOUS TRPP Q SCHAOUS*. The room has grown dark, stifling. Someone's footsteps echo down the hall.

Well, it suddenly occurs to me, maybe so. Maybe the wife *is* out there. She's gone somewhere far away. By whatever means of transport, she's gone somewhere far out of my reach. Maybe our relationship has suffered irreversible damage. Maybe it's a total loss. Only I haven't noticed. All sorts of thoughts unravel inside me, then the frayed ends come together again. "Maybe so," I say out loud. My voice echoes, hollow.

"Tomorrow, when we paint it, you'll see better," he resumes. "All it needs is a touch of color to make it an airplane."

I look at the palms of my hands. They have shrunk slightly. Ever so slightly. Power of suggestion? Maybe the light's playing tricks on me. Maybe my sense of perspective has been thrown off. Yet, my palms really do look shrivelled. Hey, now, wait just a minute! Let me speak. There's something I should say. I must say. I'll dry up and turn to stone if I don't. Like the others.

"The phone will ring soon," the TV PEOPLE rep says. Then, after a measured pause, he adds, "In another five minutes."

I look at the telephone; I think about the telephone cord. Endless lengths of phone cable linking one telephone to another. Maybe somewhere, at some terminal of that awesome megacircuit, is my wife. Far, far away, out of my reach. I can feel her pulse. Another five minutes, I tell myself. *Which way is front, which way is back?* I stand up and try to say something, but no sooner have I got to my feet than the words slip away. —HARUKI MURAKAMI

(*Translated, from the Japanese, by Alfred Birnbaum.*)

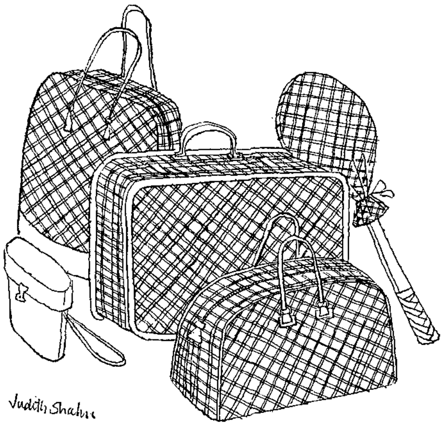
A REPORTER AT LARGE

OUT THERE—I

Beulah Morgan has lived in Newhallville, a working-class neighborhood of New Haven, Connecticut, since 1953. She moved there with her parents from Ansonia, a mill town a few miles west, because, she says, "black people couldn't buy a house in a good neighborhood in Ansonia." By Beulah's parents' lights, Newhallville was a very good neighborhood. Its leafy streets and well-built three-family houses had been home to a stable population of factory workers and their families for more than a century. The neighborhood got its name from George T. Newhall, whose Carriage Emporium was, in 1855, the largest manufacturer of carriages in the world. After the Civil War put Newhall, whose main trade was in the South, out of business, the Winchester Repeating Arms Company became New Haven's—and Newhallville's—largest employer. After the Winchester plant was sold to Olin Industries, a Midwestern ammunition and brass company, in 1931, Olin became the neighborhood's mainstay. Newhall Street, where Beulah's parents bought their house, dead-ended at the Olin plant. In 1953, there was every reason to believe that Beulah's family's social mobility would be, in the American way, upward.

New Haven has had an African-American community since the seventeenth century, but until the Second World War its members usually found themselves blocked from the better industrial jobs—compelled to accept instead lower-wage employment as, typically, waiters or porters at Yale University. For many years, they were also blocked from living outside a ghetto, near Yale, known as Dixwell. In Newhallville, factory work, like housing, went first to Irish immigrants, later to Germans and Eastern Europeans, and then to Italians. The era of immigration from Europe having ended, however, many of the jobs generated by the wartime industrial boom of the nineteen-forties went to blacks. New Haven's black community grew from five thousand in 1930 to ten thousand in 1950 and to twenty-three thousand in 1960. Most of the new arrivals were from the South—many came, in fact, from one particular area of North Carolina—and in the nineteen-fifties and sixties many black families settled in Newhallville. The Olin plant was going strong; in 1953, it employed sixty-five hundred people. Although none of the men in Beulah Morgan's family worked at Olin, they all worked in factories. Her first husband worked at Scoville Manufacturing, in Waterbury. Her second husband, Carl Morgan, whom she married in 1954, worked at Simkins Industries, in New Haven. Beulah herself was a doctor's receptionist on Dixwell Avenue for twenty-two years. Today, she works as a receptionist for a dentist in Newhallville. And her husband is still, after forty-five years, at Simkins Industries.

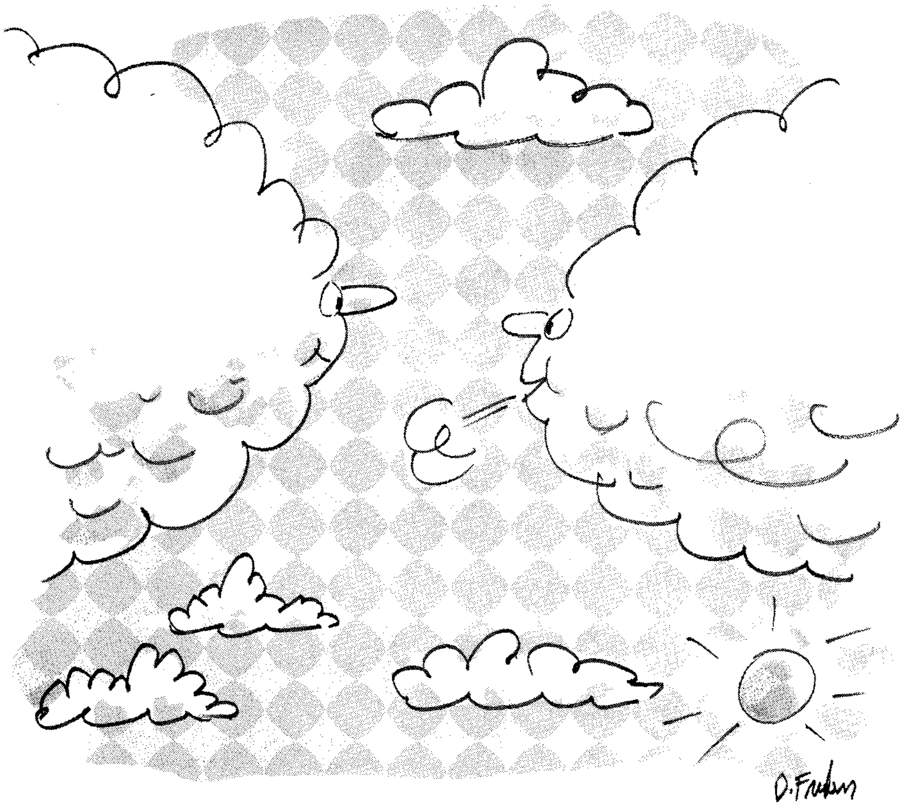
New Haven, like every old industrial city in America, fell into a steep economic decline starting sometime in the nineteen-fifties or sixties. Factories began to cut back and then to close. Unemployment mushroomed. By 1981, when the Olin plant was broken up and sold, it employed barely a thousand people. The city's middle class, which had been trickling off to the suburbs since at least the First World War, started leaving in earnest. But while the over-all population of the city shrank, from a hundred and fifty thousand in 1960 to a hundred and twenty-two thousand in 1988, its black population continued to grow. By 1980, there were forty thousand black people in New Haven; there may be as many as fifty thousand today. An influx of Latinos, mostly from Puerto Rico—and mostly, like the swelling population of blacks, unskilled and ill-educated—also began in the nineteen-sixties. Poverty came to engulf large parts of the city. The 1980 federal census found New Haven to be the seventh-poorest major city in America. It is probably even poorer today. Real unemployment is estimated at thirty per cent. Among young people, it is fifty per cent. All five of Beulah Morgan's children—the youngest was born in 1961—still live in New Haven. Four of them are unemployed.



Beulah's parents sold their house on Newhall Street in 1975 and bought a house in Hamden, which is outside New Haven but adjoins Newhallville. They live there today. Beulah and her husband own a modest house in Newhallville. Four of their children, meanwhile, cannot afford even to rent. Two live with Beulah; the other two have lived on and off with their parents since becoming adults, and each currently lives in an apartment paid for entirely by public assistance. Beulah's six grandchildren have all lived with her at various times. She now has effective custody of one, and her mother has legal custody of three. The two grandchildren still in the custody of their mother have different fathers. Their mother, who has never married, is thirty-three years old. Let's call her Anjelica. (I have changed many of the names in this article.) Let's call her sons Terry Jackson and Buddy Mills.

Terry and I are eating spaghetti at the kitchen table in his mother's apartment, on Wallace Street. It's mid-December, 1989. Anjelica, a glass of wine in her hand, is standing in a doorway watching us eat. The telephone rings. Anjelica answers it. Terry stops eating and watches his mother. Something about the way she mumbles tells him that the caller is his grandmother. He goes back to his supper. Terry's girlfriend, Lakeeda, has been calling every few minutes. Terry, who is sixteen, and Lakeeda, who is eighteen, have been estranged lately. Anjelica has been trying to broker a reconciliation. Lakeeda has just invited Terry over to her house. Hence his rush to eat.

Talking to her mother seems to turn



"I'll see you the day after tomorrow. Tomorrow is supposed to be cloudless."

• •

Anjelica into a teen-ager. She pouts, murmurs, and pouts some more. Anjelica is a slight, fine-featured woman with short straight hair and clear chestnut-colored skin. She is dressed tonight in sweatpants and a T-shirt advertising the Connecticut state lottery with the slogan "You Can't Win If You Don't Play." Her younger son, Buddy—he's six—is absorbed in a game of Nintendo on the television in the living room. Somebody has cut Buddy's hair in a stubbly fade that makes him look like a tiny Mike Tyson. He's a stocky child, wearing flannel pajamas. I think Buddy should come and have some spaghetti. Buddy doesn't agree. I realize I've never seen Buddy eat anything that isn't sweet. The spaghetti is good, but Anjelica, who made it, is not eating, either.

Beulah is in the hospital for surgery. Anjelica is trying to explain why she and Terry have started visiting her in shifts. Somebody, it seems, is trying to break into their apartment. Twice she has come home and found the doorjamb scratched and smashed. Leaving the apartment empty for even an hour is now out of the question. Anjelica thinks she knows who the would-be burglar is. She and her sons moved in here four months ago. They had no problems—*nothing*—for a month and a half. Then a Puerto Rican woman moved in upstairs. The woman's boyfriend is the suspect. He drinks and he beats her up. Whoever it is trying to break in, Anjelica has a plan to catch him. She will have her own boyfriend come over late at night, park on the next block, and slip in the back door. In the morning, she and her sons will leave the house. Her boyfriend will stay inside, making no noise. When somebody tries to break in—*boom*. Her boyfriend is big and strong and, Anjelica says, crazy. He works as a painter, off and on, at Yale.

Anjelica says goodbye to her mother and moves to the living-room doorway. She stands there studying Terry. A huge, soft smile slowly lights her face. "I remember first love," she says. Her voice is husky. She shakes her head. "I was *crazy*. I was sixteen, too. When I got upset, I went and got a gun and I was going to *kill* him, then kill myself."

Terry, devouring the last of his spaghetti, does not look up from his plate. His mother still wears a dreamy smile as she says, "After all the time we was going together, he met somebody else and a month later he married her."

Anjelica turns to watch Buddy, who is twisting frantically in front of the TV, pushing buttons on a remote-control unit to make Mario, an animated character in plumber's overalls, jump over lethal creatures and bounce into stars that make him temporarily invulnerable. "Use your bullets!" Anjelica shouts.

Terry, dropping his fork and rising from the table, pauses to watch Buddy play. Terry is the household Nintendo champion. "I'm a *crazy* Nintendo freak," he says. But Lakeeda is waiting. He dodges into a bedroom to dress.

Anjelica and I join Buddy while Terry agonizes over what to wear. He keeps reappearing in different shirts and sweaters. Anjelica and I tell him, without looking away from the TV, that the white turtleneck and the boots look great. Yes, he has used enough cologne. Terry starts singing, in a wild falsetto, "The girls, the girls, they love me."

I glance up at Terry, who is standing in the doorway. He is tall and lithe, and at that moment, wearing a manic grin, and with his hair in a high-low cut that rises in a solid cylinder at least four inches above his head, he looks electrified: fifty thousand volts of high spirits surging through his frame. He hunches his shoulders, splays his arms, and starts an explosive little hip-hop dance. The apartment seems suddenly too small to hold him. I offer to drive him to Lakeeda's.

In the car, with the Gothic ramparts of Yale's Payne Whitney Gymnasium rolling by on our right, Terry says, "My mother *love* Lakeeda." Terry is wearing a Chicago Bears parka over his turtleneck, and a tall blue ski cap. "And Lakeeda's mother love me. And Lakeeda's little son, Tyrone, he love me *dearly*. I love him, too. And me and Lakeeda, we love each other. So, I guess, when push come to shove, me and her just gotta be together."

Terry is gazing raptly up at a red stoplight. A smile is playing around his mouth. His teeth glint and his eyes shine. He is a strikingly good-looking boy, long-eyelashed and fine-jawed. The most striking thing about him, though, is an eerie purity of self-

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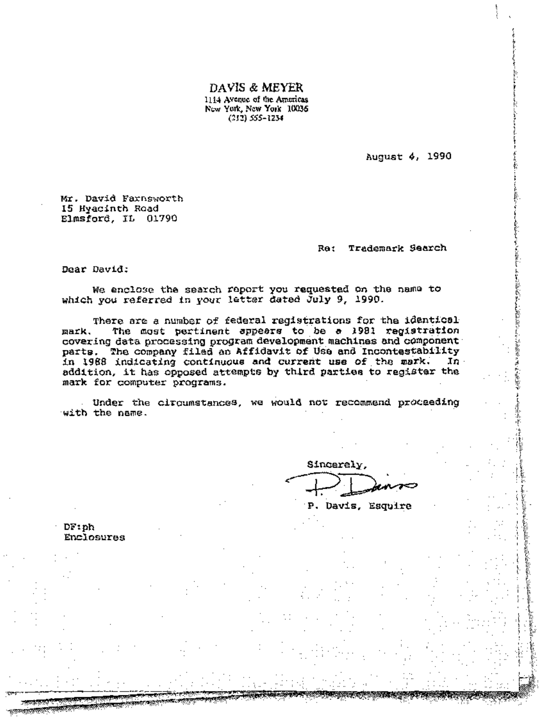

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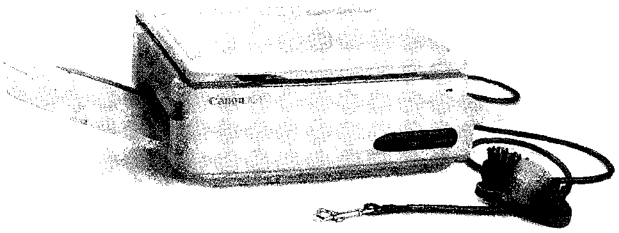

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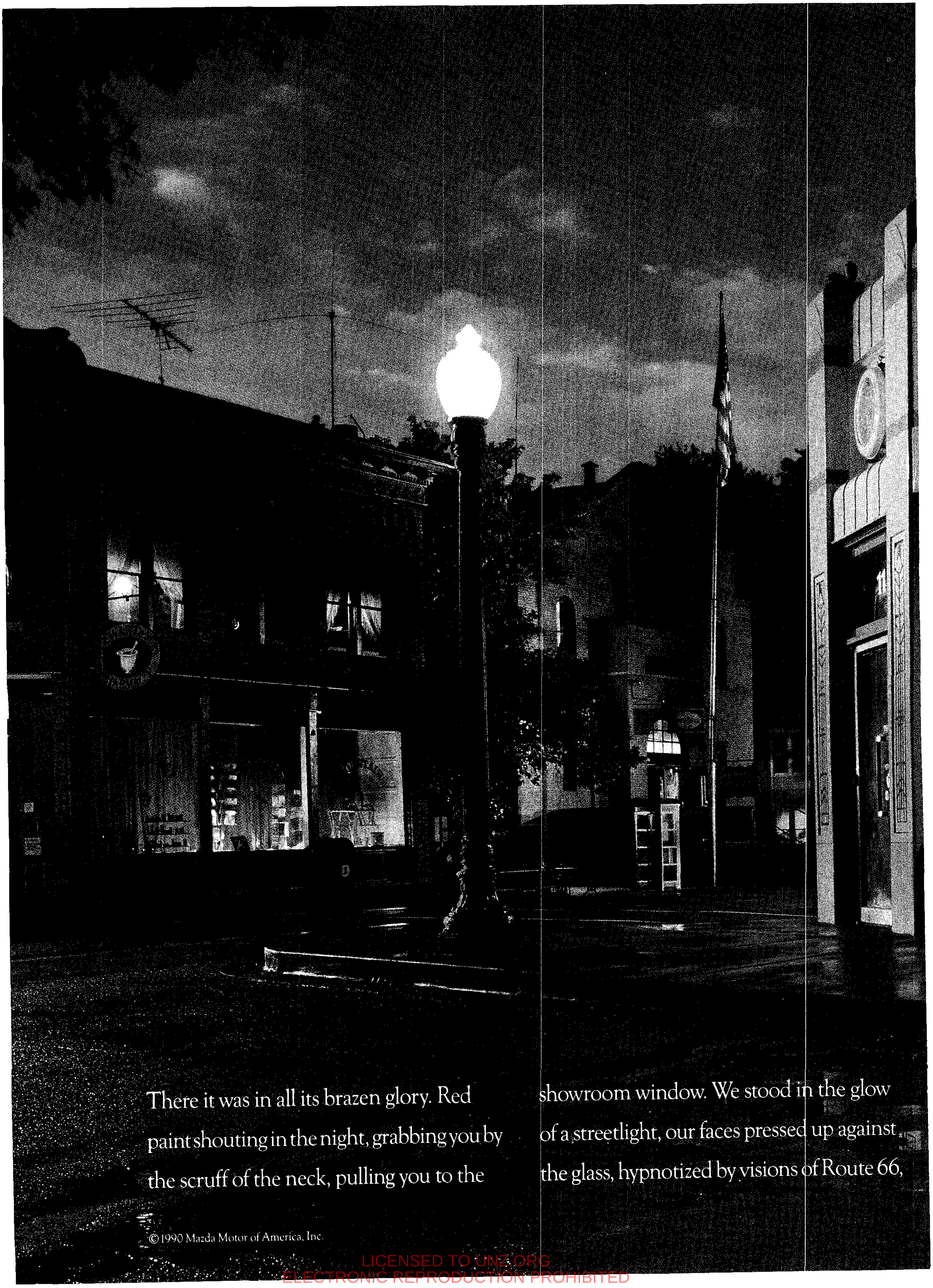

There it was in all its brazen glory. Red paint shouting in the night, grabbing you by the scruff of the neck, pulling you to the showroom window. We stood in the glow of a streetlight, our faces pressed up against the glass, hypnotized by visions of Route 66,

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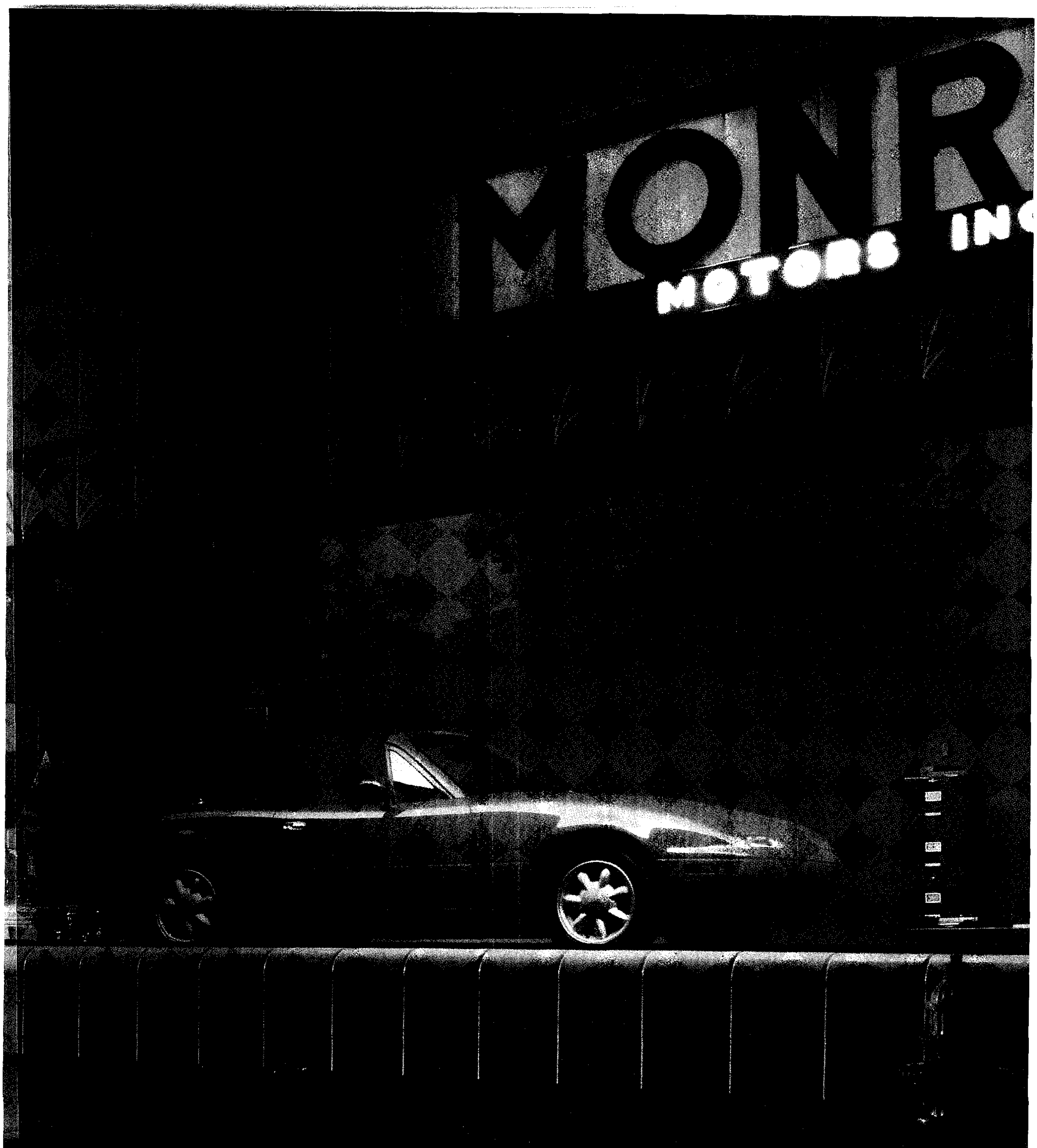

road racing, and rock and roll. Each of us praying that our dad harbored the same secret dreams, and would bring this beauty home before it got away. The Mazda Miata.

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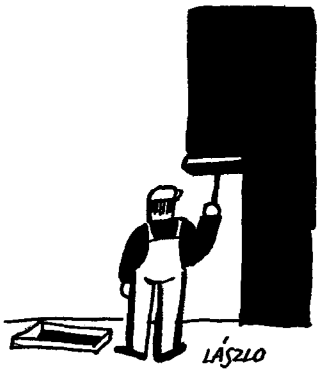
expression. He can say "I love him" with utter naturalness. And when he tells me stories, which he does a lot, he always tells them the same way—eagerly, easily, with no discernible embarrassment or pride—regardless of whether the story he is telling reflects well or shamefully on him. His indifference to manipulating me sometimes seems too good to be real, and yet I've noticed few inconsistencies in his accounts of his life and times. I can't imagine what he thinks of me, this white dude from New York with a notebook and a million questions. I give him rides and buy him meals, and he says he enjoys our chats.



"Welcome to the Terrordome," Terry murmurs. This is a rap lyric, and hearing it reminds me suddenly of something that Lisa Sullivan, a black Yale graduate student and community activist, told me. "The older folks just don't understand that being a teen-ager these days is *brutal*," Lisa said. "It's much worse than it was to be a teen-ager in the forties, when people were afraid of the Klan, of being called 'nigger,' of having somebody spit on them. These kids know that the whole society hates who they are. And they can't *help* who they are. Why do you think their favorite band calls itself Public Enemy Number One?"

"Welcome to the Terrordome" is the latest release by Public Enemy, which is indeed Terry's favorite band. We are now passing a Kentucky Fried Chicken stand that is a notorious teen hangout. Terry cranes to see who is inside. " 'Round about midnight, that's when it's *showtime* there," he says. "All the crazy cars, all the crazy girls, all the crazy clothes. I bet some of my homeboys will be there tonight. I won't be, though. I'll be with Lakeeda."

I drop Terry on the west side of town—on a dark, quiet street lined with large white houses—and start back toward his mother's. On Edgewood Avenue, black teen-age boys in bulky parkas and tall ski caps stand on every corner, despite the cold, selling drugs. At the western edge of the Yale campus, the drug dealers abruptly disappear. On the radio, a woman chants, rap-style, "I wanna see a bank account with lots of zeros after the first five numbers; I wanna see *Hamiltons*." Downtown New Haven looks deserted. The road passes under an immense concrete parking garage. Wallace Street lies east of the city, in a ramshackle, unfocussed neighborhood, one of many areas of New Haven marooned by postwar highway construction. It is miles from Newhallville, Anjelica's real home. Anjelica studies me through a window before she lets me in. We sit at the kitchen table drinking an ice-cold rosé wine called Canei.

"I was sixteen when Terry was born," Anjelica says. "It was my freshman year. His father was a couple years older. After he graduated, he joined the service. Terry's real name is Peter, same as his father. He has his last name, too. But I call him Terry, because me and his father never got along. He never took responsiblity for his son. On the day after Terry was born, though, I met this other guy, who worked at the hospital. Me and him fell in love. We was high-school sweethearts. Then he went to the Air Force. He stayed away ten years. He just came back a few years ago."

Anjelica smiles to herself. Then she frowns. "He never should've come back," she says. "He's smart. He's had some damn good jobs. He was a manager of Wendy's. But he blew it. Now he just sits around his house smoking cocaine. I heard he broke into some place and was out on the street, selling stuff. Uh-uh. He blew it."

The phone rings. Anjelica picks it up, grunts a few times, and hangs up without saying goodbye.

"Let's see," she says. "I graduated from Hillhouse High in 1975. Then I went to secretarial school. But I was mainly into drugs. In high school, we just smoked reefer and took acid and black beauties—some kind of speed pill. But then I got into snorting coke, and freebasing. My big sister, Ruby, was really into it. She was into P-dope—that's like heroin. And my other sister, Darla, she'd take anything you gave her. She *still* will. And my little brother, Button, he got to be a dealer. He was into freebasing. He used to bug out."

Anjelica laughs. "One night, Button took a glass basing pipe and just broke it in his hand," she says. "He was *crazy*. We was all lookouts for Button. I was a bag lady, too. I held the drugs. I never had to buy no drugs, because I got paid in drugs. I used to make runs to New York sometimes. I was the pickup girl. Reefer, cocaine. I only tried P-dope once, on my twenty-fifth birthday. I didn't like it. And I never injected *nothing*."

Anjelica pours us both some more Canei. "But Terry got kind of tired of me," she says. "He said he didn't want me no more. He went to live with my mother. That's when I landed on the street. I was twenty, twenty-one years old. I ended up living a lot of different places. Had a house on Gibbs Street. Stayed at the Pond Lily Motel. I always kept a room for Terry, but he just liked living with my mother more than he liked living with me. He stayed with his father's parents, too, over on Bassett Street. They were good to him. When I was twenty-eight or twenty-nine, I got down to ninety-six pounds. I was freebasing. I was dehydrated. My mother, she was hysterical. She put me on a special diet, with lots of water and fruit juices and meat. I kept getting high, though, even when I was staying with her. I went into the hospital for a month, but when I come out I got right back into it. I just couldn't get away from it. Living with my mother and my brother, it was like living in a hellhouse. They're always picking fights. They're crazy about money. You come in with any money, they want it. Soon as I put Buddy down to sleep, I was gone, into the street."

Buddy comes into the kitchen. He starts clamoring for jello. Anjelica ignores him. "Buddy's father came up here from North Carolina," she says. "He's a car mechanic, had him a good job, but he got too involved with the street life, so he had to go back. I went down later, in 1986, with Buddy and Terry both. Mount Olive, North Carolina. It's real quiet. Terry settled down good there. He stayed about a year. I just came back. This is my first Christmas back up here."

Buddy is now crashing around under the kitchen table, running a plastic tractor over our feet. The tractor is a Christmas present from his father; it came today in the mail. The remains of its foam packing are scattered across the kitchen floor. "I was going to get

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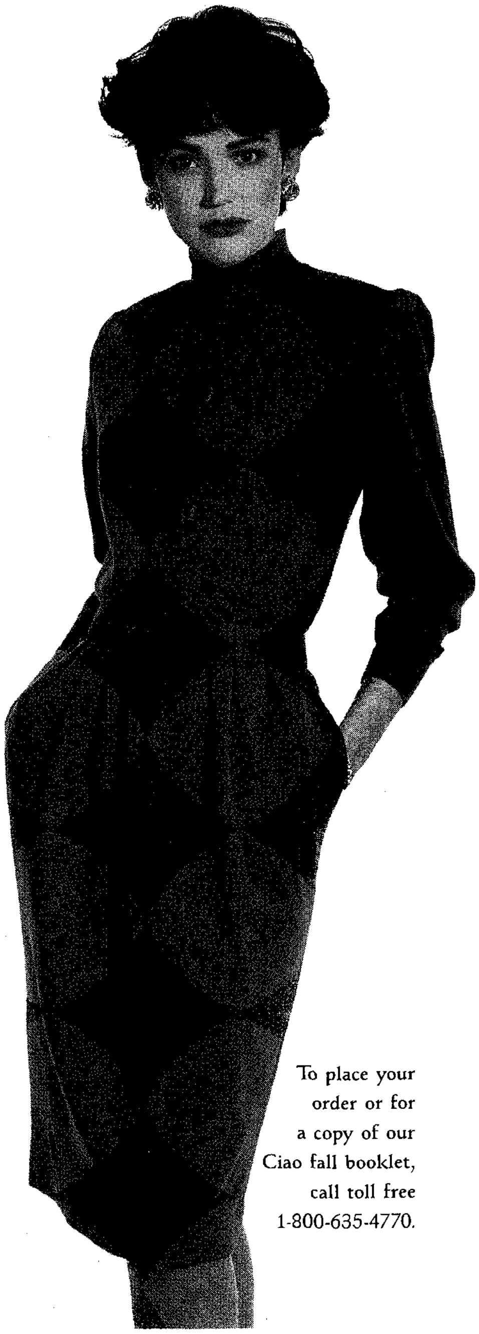

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him one of these," Anjelica says, nodding toward the tractor. "But I put it back on the shelf and got him a bigger one. More money. Forty-nine dollars. He's going to freak when he opens that box. That truck is *bad*. Buddy!" Anjelica seizes the tractor. She stuffs it back in its torn box. "Put this under the tree," she tells Buddy. A small Christmas tree stands near the television, a bright heap of presents beneath it.

Anjelica starts making sandwiches. They are for Beulah, who, she says, may or may not be out of the hospital for Christmas. "One thing about my mother, she never tried to get custody of Terry," Anjelica says. "He's still mine. I have to thank her for that. The state never tried to take him, neither. My caseworker, Mr. Johnson, he's a good guy."

Anjelica puts the sandwiches in the refrigerator and returns to the kitchen table. "You know, I haven't got high since we moved here," she says. "If you don't go out there on the street, you don't got problems. My problem is, I just don't like being alone for too long. That's why I'm going to school now—try to keep busy. I'm taking a two-year course at South Central Community College—word processing. When it's over, and I got a certificate, I'll get a job. I can type seventy words a minute."

The phone rings. Anjelica answers it, listens, grins. "Good," she says, and hangs up. "Sounds like Terry and Lakeeda's getting along good," she says.

The wine is finished. Anjelica goes to the sink and starts washing dishes. "My older brother, Kenny," she says over her shoulder, "he got into drugs a little bit, but not like the rest of us. He never let it take over his life. He's thirty-five. Works for the lottery. He's divorced. No kids. *Smart*." She guffaws. "He used to help with Terry. But he was too rough with him, always jumping on him. Button tried to be a father to Terry, too. But he couldn't make Terry follow him, neither. Nowadays, the only thing Button does is try to get everybody to go to church with him. No wonder Terry's confused. He was living in a house full of nuts."

Buddy runs in from the living room, shouting, "Five sixty-five! Five sixty-five!" It's a winning lottery number. He heard it on TV.

Anjelica stares at Buddy. She looks as if she wants to spit. "*This keeps happening*," she says heatedly. "I been playing five sixty, a dollar a box, all week. We're going to win something, I swear we are. My grandmother, she gave us all the stuff for this house—the beds, sheets, towels, blankets, everything. So I been playing her house number, five sixty, a dollar straight, a dollar a box, all week."

Buddy runs back into the living room.

"I'm going to send him down to his father in North Carolina next summer," Anjelica says, drying her hands. "And I'm going to San Diego to see my grandfather. Flying in an airplane. I never been in an airplane before. I sure hope it don't get hijacked. California's supposed to be beautiful. One thing I know—anywhere is better than here."

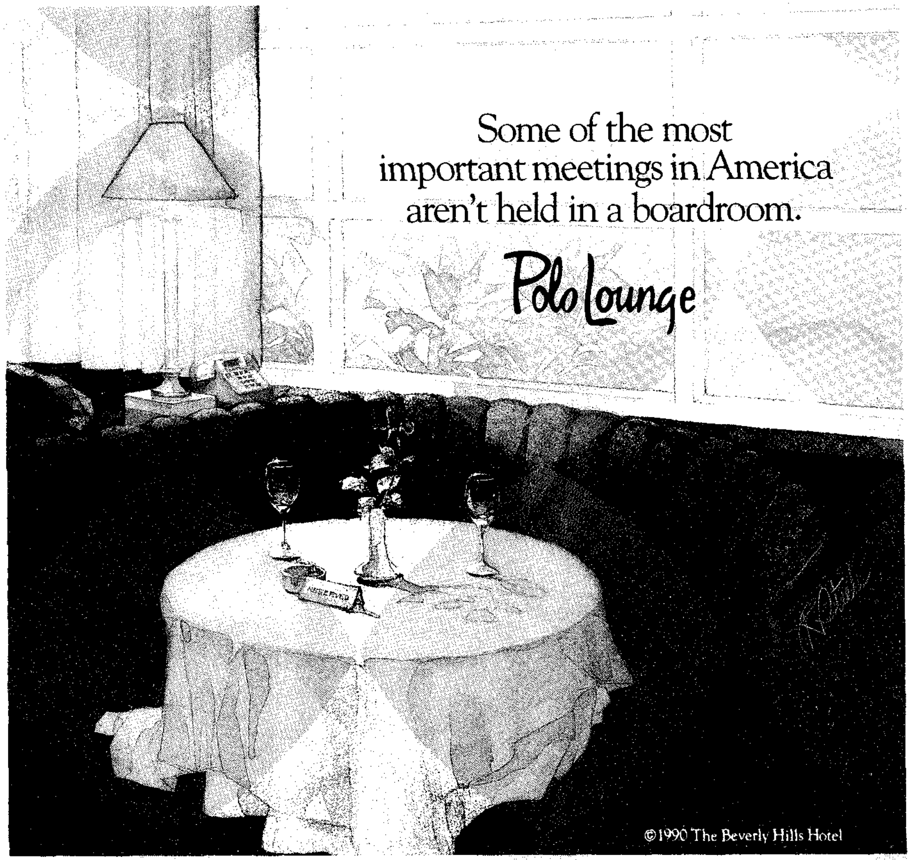
PETER JACKSON, Terry's father, spent six years in the Air Force. He is a youthful, intense, good-looking man, sharp of speech, dress, and carriage. Though he pays Anjelica twenty-five dollars a month toward Terry's support, he has little to do with her. Peter married soon after returning to New Haven. His wife has a good job with a cable-television company. They have two young sons and live in a racially mixed neighborhood. After leaving the service, Peter did some substitute teaching. (He had gone to a community college while in the Air Force.) Then, in 1984, his father, who was until his retirement a high-school custodian—Peter's mother worked at the public library—helped him get a job as a custodian at a New Haven junior high school, where he is now the night-crew leader.

Peter doesn't have much to do with Terry, either. He worries that as a small child Terry was "exposed to lots of the wrong kind of excitement—cussing, fighting, drinking, drugs." He also worries that Anjelica's family "gives him no positive input about myself." Finally, he worries that Beulah and Anjelica indulge his son. According to Peter, Terry was not happy living with his paternal grandparents, because they are disciplinarians. Beulah, he says, has always let Terry "follow the grotesque fashions of the day." Peter has tried to offer a corrective to this policy. When Terry was a student at the junior high where Peter works, for instance, all fashion-conscious boys were wearing their shoelaces untied. Peter, seeing that his son was à la mode, one day hauled him out of class and into a restroom where he tucked in his shirt and tied his shoelaces—"nice and neat, the way the athletes wear them when they play basketball"—before sending him back to class. Terry was humiliated. Beulah was furious. She phoned Peter and berated him for his insensitivity. Peter was unrepentant. Beulah's permissiveness, he believes, is one of the reasons Terry "doesn't show me or my parents the respect he should." But these days, when it comes to Terry's upbringing, Peter says, "I choose, on the advice of my parents, to remain pretty much neutral."

Indulgence is actually not Beulah Morgan's most apparent trait. She is an ample, bespectacled, vinegary woman, the owner of a piercing glance and a biting tongue. When I ask her about Terry's childhood, she immediately starts apportioning blame. "Terry's father used to come and take him downtown, saying he was going to buy him all kinds of things," Beulah says. "But then he would just buy himself something. He used to bring Terry back with nothing." Anjelica, according to Beulah, was even worse. "She couldn't take care of him. She was too busy running the street."

We are talking in Beulah's living room. It's a jumbled, comfortable place, poorly ventilated and loosely arranged around a television set, which is playing loudly. Beulah's son Button, her eldest daughter, Ruby, Ruby's three children, the eight-year-old son of Beulah's youngest daughter, Darla, and assorted other children come and go, sometimes pausing to watch the TV, or to glance shyly at me, while Beulah herself sits beside me on the couch crocheting an afghan—the third one since her surgery last month, she says—and watching TV and monitoring the outerwear of each child who heads out the front door. I wonder in passing where Beulah's husband, Carl, is; he never seems to be here when I come by. Terry, who does not get along with his grandfather, has told me I should be thankful for that.

Peter's parents were actually pretty good to Terry, Beulah says, and their strictness was not a problem. "It didn't work out because Anjelica wouldn't give them any of the state money she was collecting on Terry," Beulah



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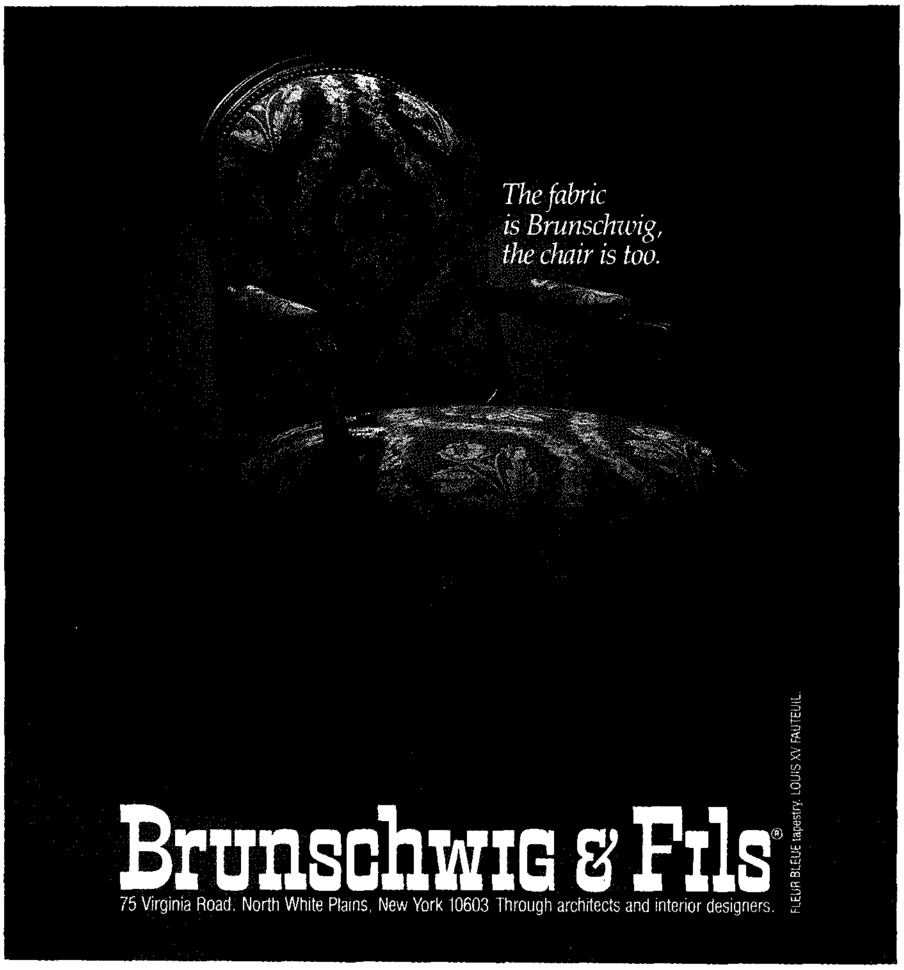

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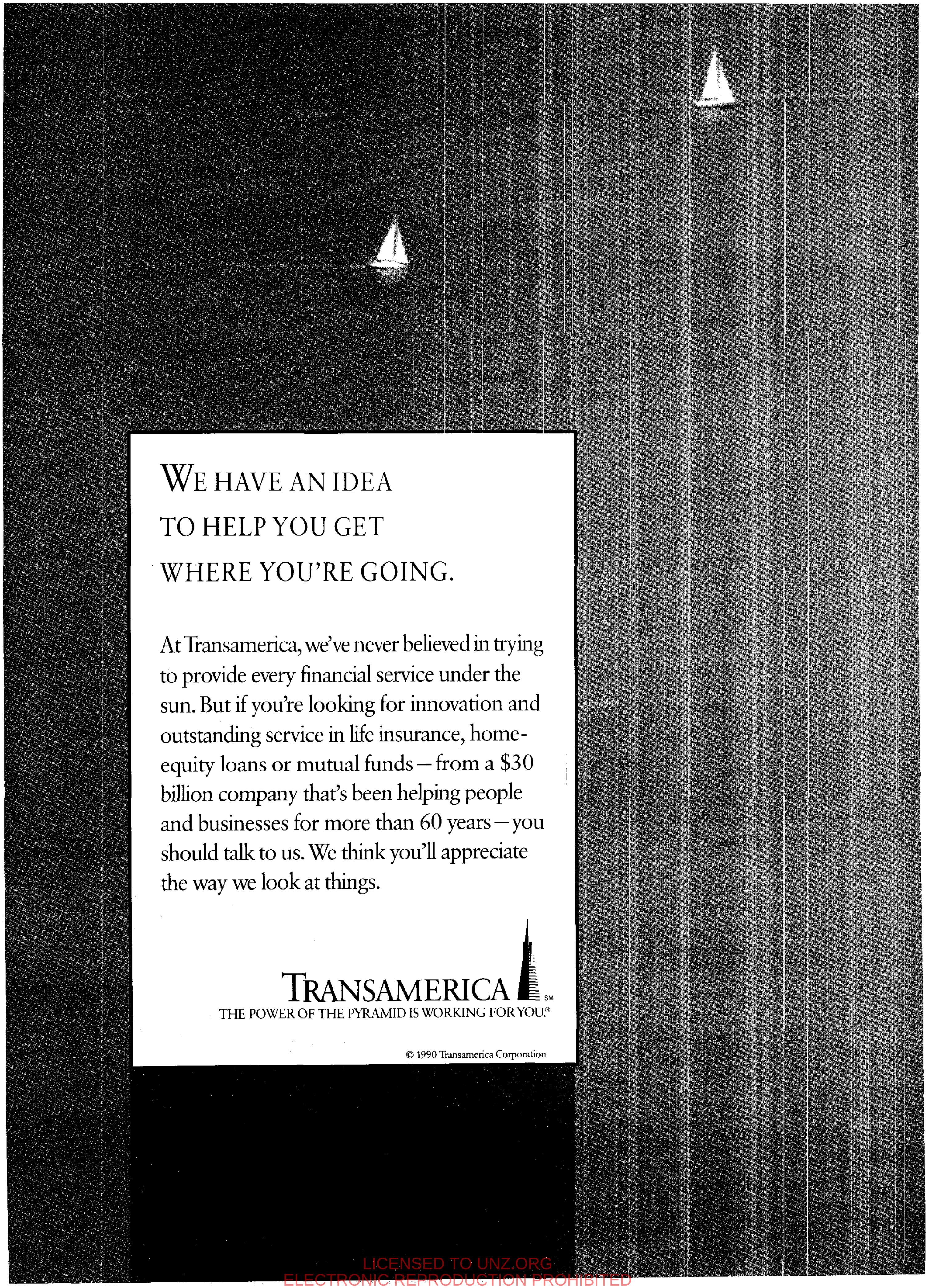

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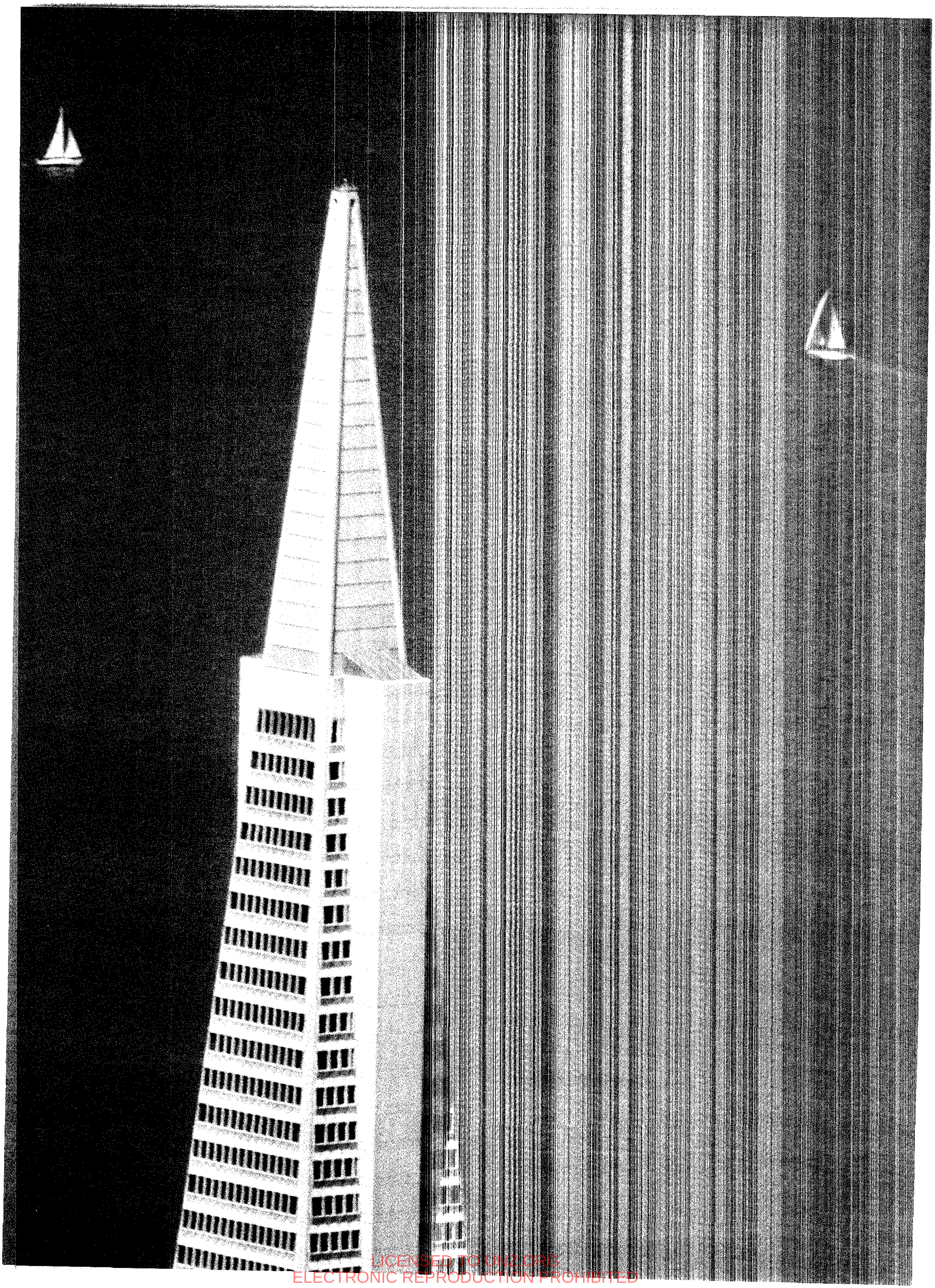

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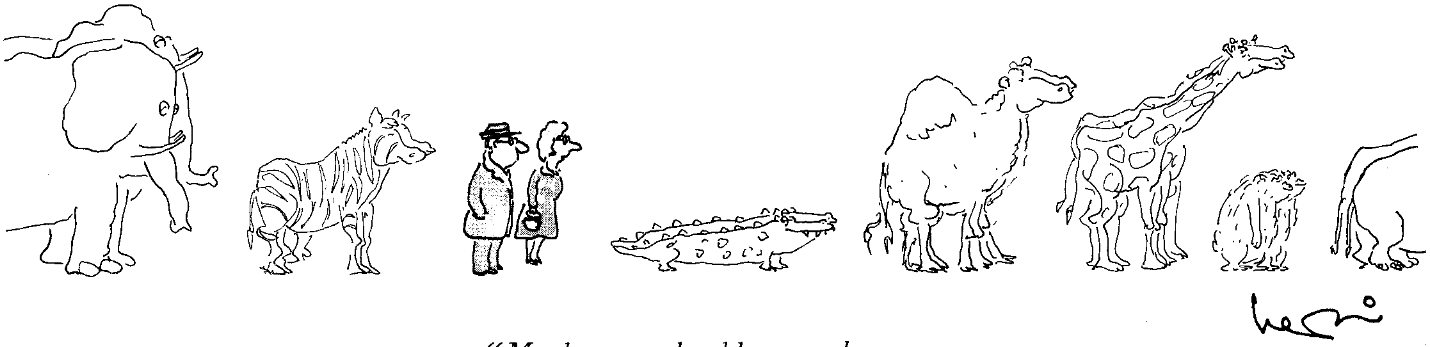
says. "That's all it was. But Peter's mother used to complain about the money *in front of Terry*. That used to make him cry." Anjelica never gave *her* any of the money she collected for Terry, either, Beulah says, in all the years he lived with her. If anyone indulged Terry, she says, it was his mother. "When he was nine or ten, he realized that if I told him he couldn't do something he could always just run over to her and *she* would say O.K. Now she's messing up Buddy the same way. She won't hit him. All he eats is candy, which is why he's so hyper. Not to mention what it does to his teeth." Anjelica's problem, Beulah says, is not lack of intelligence. "She's smart," Beulah says. "She just thinks everything is funny. That's why she lets her kids do whatever they want. Now Terry's getting the same attitude. Nothing matters. Everything's funny." Beulah and the noise on the TV both pause, and for a moment the only sound is the light clacking of her crochet hooks. "I've been a foster mother," she goes on. "I've taken in a lot of kids. And it's always the same. When the real mother gets visiting rights, they start messing up."

If it is true that nothing matters to Terry, that he simply thinks everything is funny, then he does a good job of concealing the fact from me. And yet it is true that he is more serene, less accusatory, than the adults in his life when he talks about his own upbringing; he seems to regard himself as more than the product of his family's failings. One dereliction of duty that all his guardians agree occurred—but which each ascribes to someone else—has to do with Terry's eyesight. He has poor vision but has rarely worn glasses. His reading ability, which was normal in early primary school, later fell far behind that of his classmates, at least partly because of his poor sight. Terry himself says merely that he stopped wearing his glasses because they gave him headaches. He also became, he says, something of a class clown. His antics eventually gained him a series of interviews with school psychiatrists. The interviews got more interesting as Terry got older. "When I was little, I used to hold my problems in," he says. "Now I'm just, like, *out* with 'em. Holding things in just make you madder. If a shrink talk to me now, I really act the fool, I play *crazy*."

Terry did not fool around, though, when it came to after-school work. He started selling newspapers on downtown street corners at the age of eleven. At twelve, he got his first real job—with forged employment papers, saying he was sixteen—as a busboy at the Ponderosa Restaurant, on Dixwell Avenue, in Hamden. According to a family friend who used to see him there, Terry showed aptitude for "the restaurant business." He was fast and diligent, and the customers liked him. He was worried, though, the family friend said, when she saw him at work—she might reveal his true age. Terry cleared about forty dollars a week. He spent his pay on clothes, music, fast food, and video binges with his friends. But the importance of his income could not be measured simply by its disposition. To judge from the stories told by his family, Terry's entire life had been spent within earshot of violent arguments over money. He had been the object of many of these arguments—the cost of keeping him, the squandering of the state money received on his account, the failure of his father to buy him gifts—and he had been hurt and frightened by them, but utterly powerless to act. Now, finally, he was making money himself. Beulah and Anjelica approved of his working and let him keep his wages. Terry eventually left the Ponderosa for Kevin's Seafood, another Dixwell Avenue restaurant, where his main occupation was folding boxes. He also worked at Jimmies, a seafood restaurant in Hamden. His memories of his restaurant days are fond ones. On an evening not long ago, at least, Terry and I were at a café in New Haven when he started fingering a pile of not yet folded pizza boxes. "I love these things," he said dreamily. "I got really good at folding boxes at Kevin's Seafood. The better you fold 'em, the more you can do." At Kevin's, Terry was earning about fifty dollars a week. Then a friend of a friend offered him work that paid a thousand dollars a week.

THE illegal-drug business enjoyed a spectacular boom in the late nineteen-eighties in New Haven. The city's heroin trade has been large but stable since the sixties, and the demand for marijuana, although it peaked in the early seventies, has also remained strong. The boom drug has been cocaine. Demand has soared, both in the city itself—which, it is estimated, has five thousand hard-core cocaine and



"Maybe you should go make sure we're in the right line."

• •

heroin addicts (many of whom use both drugs) and many more occasional users —and in the surrounding suburbs. The number of suburban users is hard to measure, but some four hundred thousand people live in the New Haven hinterland, and most of the users there tend to do their drug shopping in the city, so the cocaine boom has given New Haven a marked economic boost. Again, it's difficult to measure the dollar volume, but it's easy to see that many people are making great money —not only drug dealers but car dealers, owners of jewelry and sportswear stores, lawyers, bankers, and bail bondsmen.

Perhaps because of its rapid growth, the drug trade in New Haven remains loosely organized. Numerous small gangs, each more or less affiliated with a neighborhood-based federation known as a posse, operate more or less independently. The posses have names like the Ninjas, the Wild Wild West, the Underworld, and the Jungle, and they undergo constant mutations. They make alliances with and declare war on one another; factions within a posse may also fight. Although there are Latino posses, girl gangs, and a small number of grown men involved, most posse members are black teen-age boys. The drug industry's demand for labor is fierce and the pay it offers unprecedented, but the huge risks incurred by those in its retail sector, especially at the street level, insure that only the most desperate—those with the fewest other prospects—accept such employment. That means poor blacks, particularly young males, who typically possess the further qualifications of fleetness, physical strength, and profound illusions about their own immortality. The average age of New Haven's drug dealers has been falling steadily in the last two or three years. The city's public defender for juveniles can recall seeing only one drug case over the eight or nine years ending in early 1987. Today, he has more than fifty drug cases pending, and all of his clients are under sixteen. In January, a ten-year-old boy was charged with selling marijuana at a New Haven school.

Terry and his friends saw—and smoked—some marijuana in junior high. "But drugs wasn't the thing then still," he says. "Drugs was like a sneak tip still. Then it just started coming out. We started hearing about cocaine, cocaine, cocaine. People started getting nice clothes. Girls started wanting all kinds of crazy things—gold, leather, fur. They'd be sayin', 'It's all about the dividend.' I was working, but I couldn't find a job that would give me enough money. And there was always another guy who was up, you know what I'm sayin'? He'd have his nice outfit, and he'd be sayin', 'Yo, man, you should get down, you should get down.' "

The decision to get down—to start dealing drugs—is not, of course, simply economic. It is also social, flowing in some (usually large) degree out of a background of family and friends, often opening up by itself whole new vistas of friendship, and meanwhile shutting down others. In Terry's case, the fact that his mother, his uncle, and his two aunts were all dope addicts made the drug trade a family tradition of sorts. His failures in school no doubt also helped dispose him to try his luck in another area.

As for the suggestion that girls drive boys into dealing, by their demands for expensive gifts—this is a popular suggestion among the boys involved—I have heard inner-city teen-age girls reverse the equation with persuasive scorn. "Drugs changed guys," a sixteen-year-old mother from a New Haven housing project told me. "They used to be pissants. They never knew about styles. Then they started getting all this money, these cars, thinking they hot. 'You be my girl, I get you some boots, some crazy earrings, a shearling coat'—that's what they say." But I have also heard girls reluctantly confirm a sort of feminist nightmare. "Most these girls out here ain't goin' anyplace, and they know it," an eighteen-year-old girl in New Haven told me. "But they like cars, and going shopping, just like anybody else. They might not like it that a guy could get killed anytime, or go to jail, but most of them will still go out with a dealer. They're *impressed* when a guy says, 'I'll shoot that nigger if he mess with you.' They say, 'Hey, he really likes me, he'll *shoot* that guy.' Girls want to be well known, just like anybody else, and if they're not well known themselves, they want to be with a guy who is well known. Drug dealers *are* well known. They always got the latest styles. So if a guy asks her out for a date, a girl will say, 'What kind of car you got?' And he better say, 'BMW,' or 'Mercedes,' or 'Volvo.' Because if he say, 'I don't got a car. Maybe we can take a taxi, or my parents can drive us,' she gonna say, 'What? This other brother, he takes me shopping in New York, and you want to go for a *walk*?' A guy who's poor, he don't have no chance of gettin' a girlfriend here. That's why a lot of them become drug dealers, and get down with the posses."

Despite the fact that Terry was living in Beulah's house, in Newhallville, where the Newhallville Dogs (lately known simply as the Ville) reign, he got down first with the Island Broth-

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ers, a large posse whose home turf is in east New Haven. The Island, as it's called, is allied with the Ville, and Terry figured that it would be safer, from a friends-of-his-grandmother point of view, to sell drugs in a neighborhood where he was not known. Terry liked the Island boys he had met—they seemed to work hard, and to think highly of him. So he joined one of the crews then active in Quinnipiac Terrace, an exceptionally bleak public-housing project on the Quinnipiac River. (The first time I saw what is commonly called Q Terrace, my companion, a black youth counsellor from Brooklyn, muttered, "I grew up around poverty, but this place, this is *slave quarters*.")

Though Terry was only fifteen, and inexperienced, he was made a "work boy." He was stationed in a second-floor hallway, where his task was to sell small capsules of cocaine, at ten dollars apiece, to customers directed to him by "piss boys" stationed out on the streets. Because he handled money, he was paid better than the piss boys, who are hired less for their intelligence or probity than for their willingness to use force—piss boys normally carry guns—against competitors and would-be thieves. For a twelve-hour shift—noon to midnight—six days a week, Terry was paid a thousand dollars in cash. Sunday was his day off.

The work was scary. You had to watch out for rip-offs—customers who might try to grab the drugs and run—and for boys from a rival posse, and watch out, too, for undercover policemen posing as customers. The customers at Q Terrace were black, white, and Latino; most were in their twenties or thirties. Q Terrace, being near the junction of Interstate Highways 91 and 95, not only served New Haven's resident drug users but was a "stop 'n' cop" for buyers from the suburbs and outlying towns. Terry and his co-workers called their customers "baseheads" and thoroughly despised them. The young dealers did not use cocaine themselves—Terry has still not tried it—and, according to Terry, would not sell it to other teenagers. "It make people comatose," he says. "Everybody know that."

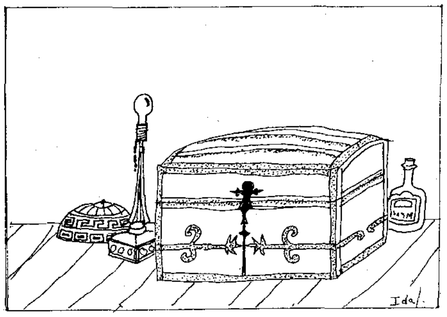
On a good day, Terry handled three or four hundred sales. His crew kept its supplies in a guarded apartment near the hallway where Terry, as he says, "worked the work, pumpin' it off." They mostly sold powder in the ten-dollar capsules—users could either snort it; dissolve it in water and inject it; or cook it into crack or freebase and smoke it—but sometimes they sold crack directly, in twenty-five-dollar rocks in little yellow bags. Terry was not involved in the supply line that brought the drugs to Q Terrace, but he heard that it ran through New York City.

It was a heady time, all in all. The crushing financial pressure that had haunted most of Terry's life was decisively eased, the current reversed. He was no longer dependent on his family. "Quick fast in a hurry, I was makin' crazy dollars," he says. "I was livin' large. I started buyin' all kinds of things—new clothes, and gold, stuff for my mother, stuff for my grandmother, stuff for the girls. Yeah, I started gettin' all *kinds* of girls—crazy girls, material girls. You know, there's a lot of girls out there that *just* want to go with a drug dealer."

Although Q Terrace is miles from Newhallville, black New Haven can be a small town, and Anjelica soon heard that Terry had started dealing. "I used to buy a lot of coke out at Quinnipiac myself," she says. "So when I heard Terry was there I went and got my gun and went out there. I couldn't find him that time. But then I started noticing him coming in about 1 A.M., and I knew they closed their shop at twelve midnight out there, and he had a lot of money on him suddenly now, so I knew. Then I *really* knew when I heard the girls talking in the laundromat about a new boy working out at Quinnipiac. They said he was wearing a blue leather bomber jacket and a blue leather cap, and I knew that wasn't nobody but my son."

Anjelica was frantic, she says. "I was scared to death. Kids were getting shot all over the place." She recalls telling Terry, "This ain't gonna work."

But Terry just recalls his mother's saying, "I can't tell you what to do. You gotta do what you gotta do. I just wish you the best of luck."



In any case, things began to get hot at Q Terrace. "The big boys," as Terry calls the police, bought drugs with marked bills and arrested several dealers. They ran a sting operation, posing as dealers, and caught a number of would-be buyers. Terry decided to take a break. One week after he stopped working at Q Terrace, the young man who had recruited him there was arrested. "It was close," Terry says. "So I got me another job in a restaurant, and for a while I just chilled."

WHEN the New Haven *Register* surveyed public opinion on the city's worst problems last year, drug abuse came in third. Drug-related crime was first. Meanwhile, the New Haven chief of police estimated that eighty per cent of all crime in the city was drug-related. In 1988, there were twenty thousand Class A felonies—serious crimes—reported in New Haven. Residents and non-residents alike consider large parts of the city unsafe. A nurse at a New Haven hospital, a white woman who lives in a nearby suburb (most of New Haven's workers now live outside the city), told me that she had not set foot downtown for many years, and that she told her adult children never to shop there. "If you have to drive through, keep your doors locked and your windows rolled up, even in summer," she said. "And always look in the back seat of your car before you get in it." On the day before we spoke, her suspicions about downtown New Haven had been dramatically confirmed by a multiple shooting on the steps of the state courthouse, which faces the New Haven Green. Only three people were injured, none of them seriously, but it seemed likely that many in the midday Christmas-shopping crowd who had to dive for cover might also be persuaded to stick to suburban malls thereafter. There were more than three hundred and twenty shootings in New Haven in 1989, and thirty-four murders—more murders per capita than in Chicago, Los Angeles, or New York City.

The belief that nearly all this mayhem is "drug-related" is not universal—critics of the police say the term is a catchall for every crime the police can't solve—but there is no argument about the explosive growth of the drug problem. In 1988, the New Haven police made two thousand seven hundred drug-related arrests—nearly four times the number they had made in 1984. The city's superintendent of schools estimates that a third of New Haven's kindergartners have cocaine-addicted mothers. The weapons being confiscated from dealers show clearly their increasing wealth and seriousness: .38s and .45s have been replaced by AK-47 assault rifles and 9-millimetre semi-automatic pistols. Major dealers in New Haven today use walkie-talkies and police scanner radios and wear bulletproof vests. They fortify their homes against police attacks, using barred windows and thick oak doors that will stand up to a battering ram.

The main impact of the drug boom has been, without question, on the black community. Twenty-nine of the thirty-four murder victims in 1989 were black. Many black neighborhoods have drug dealers standing on virtually every corner, day and night. Gunfire is so common that many residents are careful not to sit in windows that face the street. After bond for two of the suspects in the courthouse shootings was set at half a million dollars apiece (the suspects were members of the Kensington Street International, or K.S.I., posse; the victims were members of the Ville and the Island), many black New Haveners noted how shootings in *their* neighborhoods never provoked such a serious judicial response. Was it that certain neighborhoods had simply been ceded by the authorities as free-fire zones?

When I first started going to New Haven, I was taken on a tour of the city's neighborhoods by two black residents. Their conversation reminded me of others I'd heard—in Third World countries suffering from chronic guerrilla war.

"Who was that waved hello to you?"

"He was the guy that was with that girl who got shot in the eye."

"The fourteen-year-old?"

"That's right."

"How's she doing?"

"She gettin' better."

"Who did the shooting?"

"The Ville got blamed for it, because some of their boys was following that guy around, because he's K.S.I., so it's another beef now. But the Ville say they didn't do it."

"That don't make no difference."

Virtually every black person in New

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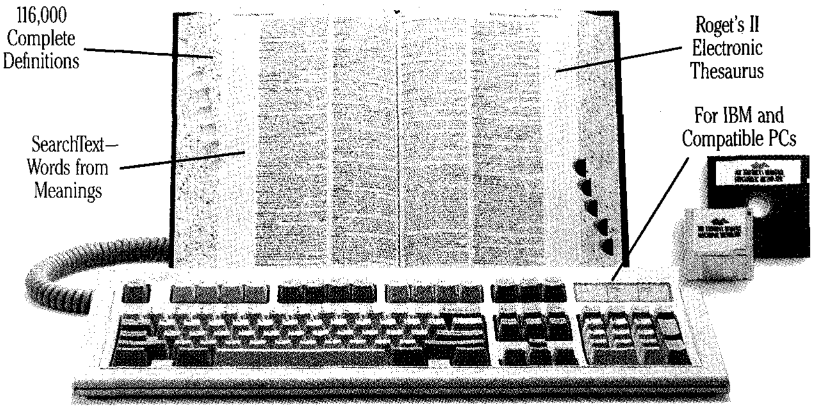
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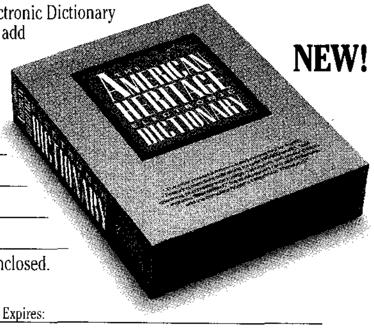

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Haven knows someone who has been shot. One of my guides, a college student home on vacation, told me about a friend of hers, a twenty-two-year-old man, who had just been shot to death on the street by a sixteen-year-old dealer. On Newhall Street, not far from his grandmother's house, Terry Jackson heard shots one afternoon last year, ran down the street, and found a seventeen-year-old friend lying on the sidewalk. "It was my boy Gary," he told me, with even more than his usual dissociation. "He wasn't moving, but he was still alive. If I had a car, I would've throwed him in it and drove him to the hospital. The ambulance came and took him, but he died anyway. He was shot right here." Terry indicated a spot just below his left eye, and he kept his finger there, drilling abstractedly into his cheek, for a full minute.

An inordinate number of the people getting shot these days in New Haven are teen-agers—a fact clearly connected to the number of teen-agers selling drugs. This connection can be overdrawn, however. It's the booming underground economy—primarily cocaine money—that finances the proliferation of guns, but once the guns are in circulation they take on a life of their own. Among teen-age boys, especially, they become status items. They get endlessly traded around. They signify power, safety, glamour, excitement, manhood. And they end up settling petty disputes that until recently were settled with fists. In several visits to New Haven public high schools, I heard little talk about drug abuse (the drug of choice among students remains, overwhelmingly, alcohol; cocaine abuse has, if anything, declined in recent years) but a great deal of talk about who was "packing," and who might have a "death wish," issued by some enemy, hanging over his head. In such an atmosphere, as a school counsellor put it to me, "every young man is mainly concerned with survival, with being the biggest beast on his block, which means being down with the baddest posse."

I caught a glimpse of this type of natural selection at work one December afternoon at Wilbur Cross High in New Haven. I was sitting in a second-floor classroom talking to a social-studies teacher. School was just letting out. A series of sharp pops erupted on the street outside. We looked out, and saw two cars standing at odd angles in the street. The boys inside the cars—at least three of them turned out to be Wilbur Cross students—were firing pistols at each other. Students were running, diving behind hedges and snowbanks. One of the cars started backing up the street very fast, then roared off up a side street. The other car squealed away in another direction. The scene had a heavy, panic-edged quality as people began to pick themselves up and look around to see who, if anyone, had been hit. Nobody seemed to be hurt. But then the car that had left by the side street—a large, muddy, dark-blue Buick—reappeared, barrelling out of the side street and sliding to a halt in front of the school. A girl screamed, a teacher shouted, and people began to run again as the Buick lurched around in the street, bumped over the curb, and then sped off in the direction the other car had taken. That was the end of the excitement. No one was, in fact, hurt. A white motorist who had been forced to a stop by the shootout sat banging on his steering wheel and shouting. The principal of Wilbur Cross High later reported that the motorist was yelling, "Drugs are *killing* this city!"

But the shootout was not about drugs. It seemed that a girl at Wilbur Cross had made fun of a disabled boy, calling him a cripple. He "illed" her in return. She telephoned her boyfriend, who was a member of the Ghetto, a small posse based in a housing project in east New Haven. He came to the school with some of his friends. The handicapped boy was a member of the Island Brothers, who are, along with the Ville, one of the dominant posses at Wilbur Cross, so this promised to be a serious confrontation. Many students knew it was coming. One even walked into a classroom and, pointing to a girl whose boyfriend was down with the Island, announced, "Your baby's father goin' be killed." I heard this from a self-possessed twelfth-grade girl who went on to explain, "This school's affiliated with the Island. The Ghetto, only their little piss boys go here. Also, the Island is *cute*. You know, the Ghetto, they're ugly, they're from the projects, they stink. So they want to show everybody they're on top." The Ghetto had put on a great performance on the street after school on the day of the shootout, she said. "They was *profilin'*." She imitated them: boys walking around with arms akimbo, a little like gunfighters ready to quick-draw, but with exaggerated side-to-side steps that suggested extremely fat men waddling. I had seen the walk before; it was both frightening and very funny. The Island, she said, had matched this display, and things had quickly escalated to gunfire.

The social-studies teacher with whom I watched the shootout had her own theory. She thought that it might be the beginning of a race war. She said that a white boy at the school (Wilbur Cross is less than one-third white; Hillhouse High, New Haven's other comprehensive public high school, is ninety-four per cent black) had been threatened recently by one of the posses. That was a first, she said, and very ominous, particularly since a white man had been murdered in the projects the same week. (The white man in question—he was twenty years old and well known locally as a champion swimmer—had been, according to witnesses, trying to steal drugs. He had gone to Rockview Circle—possibly the most dangerous housing project in town—to score, and had been accused there of having fled a few days before without paying for the drugs he took. The dealer's "beatmaster," whose job it was to make sure such things didn't happen, shot the accused thief in the head as he and a companion were driving their pickup truck out of Rockview Circle.)

While the social-studies teacher was telling me her theory—this was immediately after the shootout—three boys ran into her classroom. It seemed that they all lived in the projects where the Ghetto was based, and they were afraid they might be the Island's next targets. We shut the door and made them sit on the floor while we watched the corridor and the street. We tried to find out more from the boys. Each wore a ski cap. All denied being involved with the posses. Other than that, we learned nothing. The boys were obviously not pleased to find themselves being interrogated by a couple of white adults. The word "niggers" occurred in every sentence fragment they muttered. Eventually, two male teachers came and escorted them away. Afterward, I tried to imagine what the world felt like to those boys, and what I would do if I were in their place—if I felt myself in mortal danger, with no help coming from adults—and had to go home to the projects that night. And I knew: I would get down with a posse; I would get myself a gun.

TERRY lopes out of the dark before I've even come to a stop in front of Lakeeda's house. As he gets in the car, his face looks clouded and bunched up in the domelight, and as we pull away he shoots glances up and down the street. I ask what's happening; he mutters something unintelligible. Later, he tells me, "Me and Lakeeda and Tyrone was out this afternoon, just takin' a walk, and these three niggers from K.S.I. come rollin' up on us. They had guns. They even had a pit bull. I had a beef with 'em one time, but it was iced, it was over. But they seen me, and they just decided to start it up again. I was ready to fight, and they seen I was ready, and they got scared. I walked away, but I never turned my back on 'em—I ain't takin' no bullet off them. I know what time it is. We got away O.K., but I was scared, and I was mad. I'm *still* mad."

Terry broods as we drive through east New Haven. He points out a poorly lit housing project. "That's a *Terrordome* in there," he says. A few minutes later, he points down a cross street and says, "This is the hottest block in America. Niggers running all *over* in there." In the middle of a factory district, a night club looms surreally: "Montego Bay," says the neon script beneath painted coco palms. Terry twists in his seat to inspect the cars parked outside the club. "I gotta get me a fake I.D.," he says. "People be sayin' this is the best club in town."

"What would you have done if those K.S.I. guys had attacked you?"

"Just go crazy."

Going crazy is Terry's all-purpose self-defense technique. He is not heavily muscled, but he rarely has trouble with bigger boys, he says, because of his reputation for going wild when cornered. When I ask Anjelica, she confirms her son's reputation for fearless, windmill-style fighting. She also confirms that Terry met her brother Button's efforts to discipline him with a fierce display of lunacy. Terry told

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me, "I broke bottles, windows, everything I could reach when he tried that old-fashioned stuff on me. Pulled knives. Finally, he gave up, and now we get along fine."

I ask Terry what the beef with the boys from K.S.I. was about. He shrugs. "They say I dissed 'em," he says. "I don't even remember. It's just posse stuff."

Posse stuff. Although K.S.I. and the Ville are warring, gang life in New Haven is not the organized, paramilitary affair that it is in some cities (and many movies). I've seen members of the Ville sporting haircuts with a bushy "V" in back, and I've heard that they can sometimes be identified by two nicks cut in their eyebrows—K.S.I. members wear three nicks—but the local posses don't wear "colors" or scrawl territorial warnings on neighborhood walls, as more full-blown gangs do, and they don't have formal structures. Though Terry is down with the Ville, he has never been to a Ville meeting, because there has never been one, and he cannot name the posse's leader, because there isn't one. Posses provide members a measure of protection on the streets, and a structure for selling drugs (though not all members are involved in the trade), and perhaps an opportunity, within the recondite confines of the local youth culture, to become "well known," but that seems to be about it.

To become well known in the wider world, a posse member must usually make an appearance in the New Haven *Register* or, better yet, on local television. On the day of the courthouse shootings, Terry and I watched the afternoon news on Anjelica's TV. Terry recognized one of the victims, who was shown being loaded into an ambulance. "That's my boy! That's my boy!" Terry shouted. "Those are Villains that got shot!" He seemed thrilled. It had been a big news day for him. The day before, a seventeen-year-old cousin of his had been arrested, along with two other boys, for shooting up a house on Springside Avenue. The cousin was being held on eighty-five thousand dollars bond. Terry read the *Register's* story about the incident raptly. "They gonna be *staying* in jail," he said. "All them niggers in there, bet they havin' a ball." He wondered what kind of sentence his cousin might receive. He asked Anjelica, "You do ten per cent of your time now, right?"

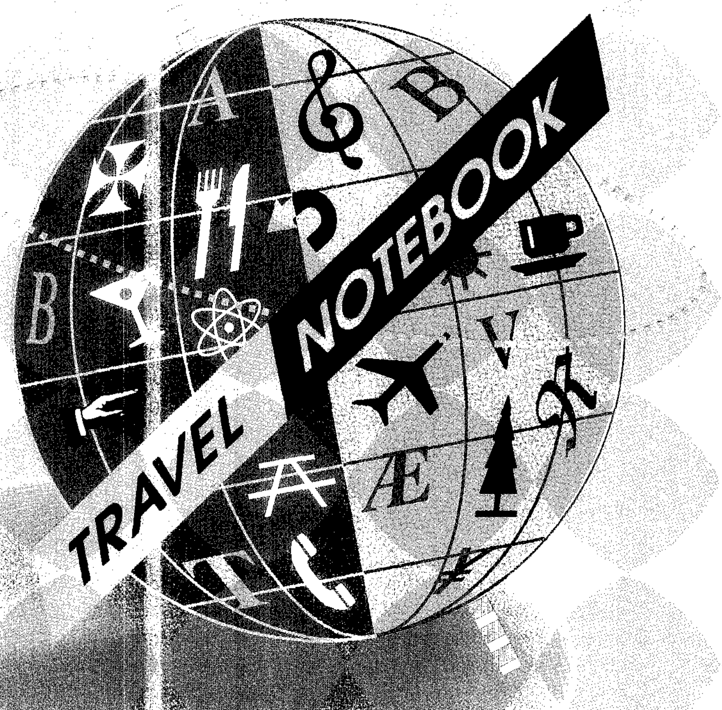
Studiously, Anjelica said, "Yes, that's right."

Terry went back to the *Register*. " 'Leader of Crack Ring Guilty,' " he read out. "Huh. That was kingpin." As he pored over the paper, I recalled hearing a New Haven public defender say, "In the newspaper, what they used to call the police-blotter page, that's my clients' Social Register."

On the evening after the close call with K.S.I., Terry and I cruise the peaceful, lamplit streets of the Whitney-Orange neighborhood, an area dense with Yale graduate students, and then, crossing Whitney Avenue, find ourselves among the great Gilded Age mansions on Prospect Street. The mansions, many of them built by factory owners (and many of them now owned by Yale), look directly down on Newhallville, where the factory workers once lived. Terry studies the vast houses set back in their vast yards, but says nothing.

ON a cold night last November, Kevin Houston, a thirty-year-old minister, led a small group of marchers across Dixwell Avenue into the Elm Haven public-housing project. Each marcher carried a lighted candle in a small glass jar wrapped in red, green, and black ribbon. Houston had called the march "to pray for the spirits of all the young brothers" who had died on the streets of New Haven since the beginning of the year. The idea was to visit each place—the alley or street corner or empty lot—where someone had been killed. The Elm Haven buildings are long, low barracks of dirty, crumbling brick. Startled by the sight of a silent line of people carrying candles, residents shouted from the shadows, "What's up?" Houston called back, "It's a vigil for the young brothers that have died!"

Under a weak street light in a windy alley—the spot where William Knox had been shot twice in the head, in April—the marchers stopped, formed a circle, joined hands, and sang the James Weldon Johnson hymn "Lift Every Voice." While the other marchers cupped the flames of their candles against the wind, Mustafa Abdul-



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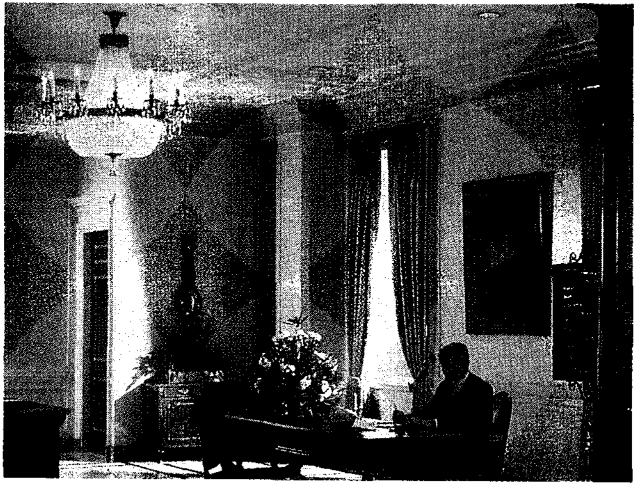

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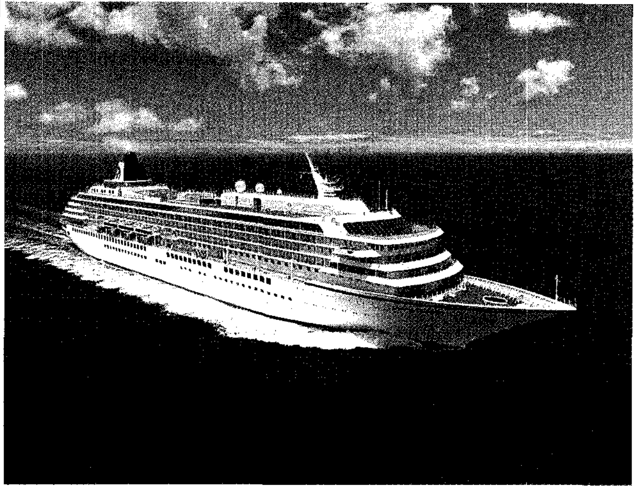

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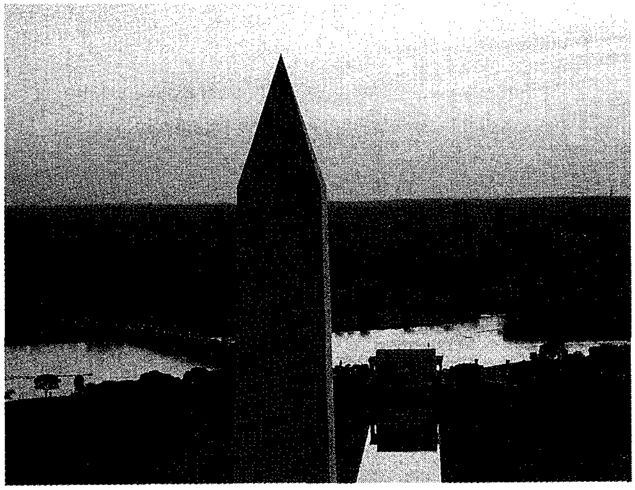

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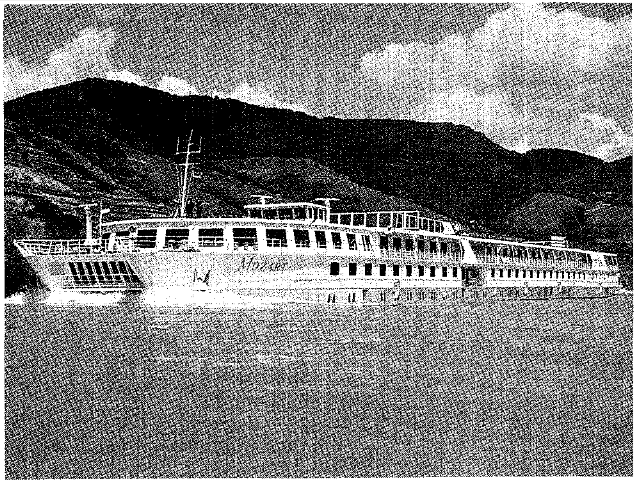

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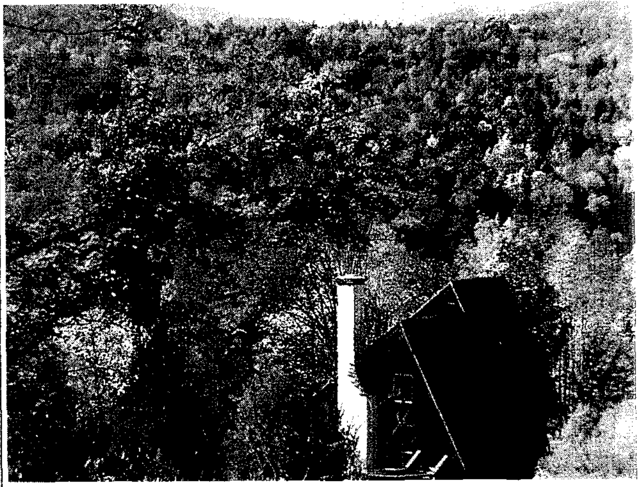

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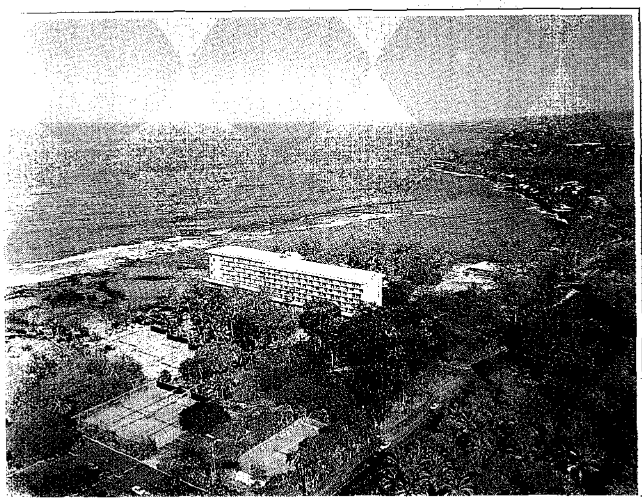

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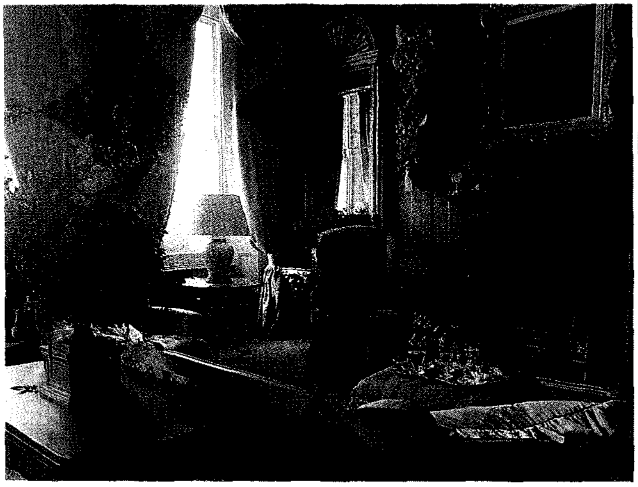

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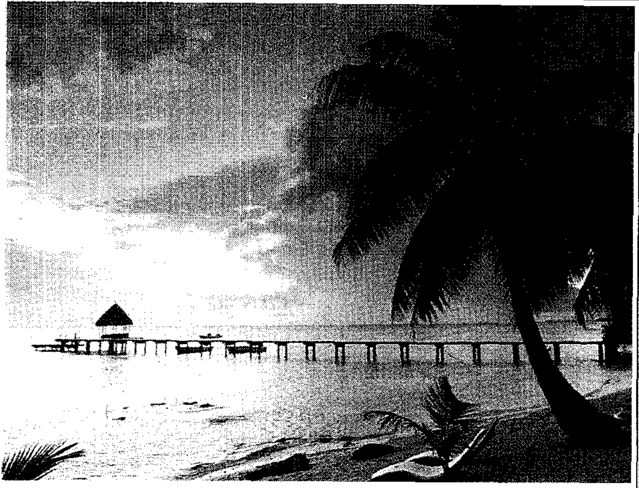

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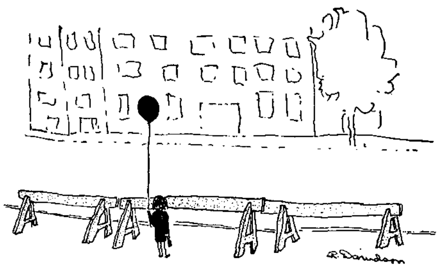
Salaam, a community activist, poured springwater on the ground in symbolic purification of the site. Someone else sprinkled charcoal and salt and then a stream of colored water. Next, Mr. Houston dripped candlewax on the spot, explaining that these substances represented the flesh, the blood, and the spirit of William Knox. The group then chanted "A Prayer for Liberation," a long rap-style poem, written for the occasion by Mr. Houston, that began with the lines "Almighty Supreme One: Remove these chains from our brains so that the community's soul will be free to stroll down the road towards true perfection," and ended with "Supreme One, Free your children!!!"

After a minute of silent prayer, the march resumed. A young woman who had been watching the ceremony in the alley ran after the group, demanding to know what this was about. Hearing the answer, she said, "I can deal with that," and joined the march. Back out on Dixwell Avenue, where the ceremony, complete with hymn and poem, was repeated in memory of Eugene Deis, who had died in February, two teenage boys in ski caps joined in, along with a pair of students from Yale Divinity School. Except for those two teen-agers (who hung back slightly and did not carry candles), though, none of the dozen or so marchers who headed up Dixwell Avenue—past the funeral homes and liquor stores, the barber shops and churches and soul-food restaurants—were in the age group directly involved in the violence. Most of the marchers were, in fact, community activists. Mr. Houston had showered the neighborhood with flyers inviting young people to join the march, but none had come, perhaps because of the cold.

As the procession headed south of Dixwell, the young woman from Elm Haven dropped out, and a haggard-looking man took her place. Although the march was supposed to be silent, the newcomer managed to let me know, between ceremonies, that he was a heroin addict with AIDS. By the time we got back to Dixwell Avenue, we were all stupid with cold. Many spots marked on Mr. Houston's map were still unvisited, but we decided to go to only one more that night. We sang and prayed and performed our libations on a street corner in Newhallville for Javon Green, who had died just three weeks before, and then, at Mr. Houston's insistence, we all gave each other big, backslapping "spirit hugs." After that, we headed back to the Elks Club on lower Dixwell, where we had left our cars, and where the man with AIDS hit me up for five dollars.

I asked Mr. Houston if he was disappointed by the turnout. He said he was, but he vowed to go on with the march the next week, and the next, even if he had to walk alone, until he had visited every murder site and prayed for the victim's soul. Rev Kev, as he is known, has a visionary streak. The first time we talked, he had regaled me with a lecture on ancient African religions, Memphite theology, and the Nubian Empire, and with his own plans to start not a church but what he called a "spiritual-consciousness house." Rev Kev is a big, quick man with long hair braided in cornrows and a fondness for homemade clerical garb; on the candlelight march, he wore a black robe with a scarlet ankh (an Egyptian symbol of life) sewn on the front. Rev Kev comes from Far Rockaway, where he grew up in poverty. He is a college graduate, a Yale Divinity School dropout, a senior adviser to the N.A.A.C.P. Youth Council in New Haven, and the youth director for the Elks Club on Dixwell, where his job description could just as well read "Get black youths interested in anything that won't get them killed or arrested."

To that end, Mr. Houston and his fellow-activists fill the calendar with dances, meetings, marches, and classes for young people. Rev Kev also writes lyrics for local rap groups which preach black unity and pride and denounce drugs and violence. In August of 1989, he and other young black activists held a "peace summit" for New Haven's warring posses. Twenty-one posse members came, including boys who had shot one another, and an agreement was reached to "chill out with the violence." A "peace council" was formed, with regular meetings and a rotating chair, to settle differences.



Within a few months, the peace council seemed to be defunct, and yet Rev Kev and the other activists were still in touch with the posses, still trying to get them to chill. Some of the younger members of the N.A.A.C.P. Youth Council are also posse members. "We have this one little guy, thirteen years old," Rev Kev told me. "You can just see him, every day, trying to decide which is more glamorous, the Youth Council or the Foote Street posse. The Foote Street boys offer him five hundred dollars a week to be a lookout. All we can offer is knowledge. They win hands down most every time!"

Mr. Houston and his friends gain the trust of the posses by making it clear that they do not talk to the police and do not blame the teen-agers themselves for their situation. They see the government's "war on drugs" as primarily a war on black youth, and, like many, many other black Americans, describe the drug onslaught and its associated violence as "genocide." Rev Kev uses the term "dominant culture" to describe the perpetrators of this genocide; most others simply say "white people." The true object of the war on drugs, they say, is to confine the violence to the ghetto, and soaring arrest rates are part of a conspiracy to "warehouse black youth." Through the Youth Council and other groups, Rev Kev and his friends try to organize inner-city teen-agers politically, campaigning for better schools, parks, jobs, and training. Rev Kev himself goes further, evangelizing against "materialism" while celebrating "knowledge." He carries this message—along with his enthusiasm for African religion and history—everywhere he goes. To the summer basketball team he coaches he shouts "Babylon!" and "Timbuktu!" Those are the names of plays. "Insurrection!" is one of the team's defensive setups.

The young black activists in New Haven are all cultural nationalists, intent on replacing "Eurocentric" models with "Afrocentric" ones. Thus, around Christmastime Rev Kev fills the Elks Club's main hall with a celebration of Kwanzaa, an "African-based" holiday. (It was actually invented in 1966 by Ron Karenga, a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, as a black-nationalist substitute for Christmas.) Local merchants set up booths, musical and dance groups perform, and, in the evening, a Kwanzaa

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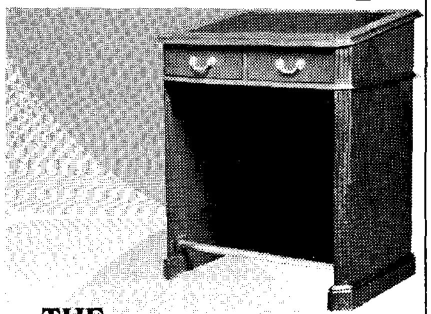

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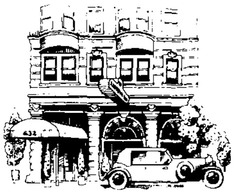

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ceremony is performed. Last year, Roger Vann, a trim, soft-voiced young activist in a gray leather cap, gave a running explanation of the ceremony. Kwanzaa, he said, is a Swahili word meaning "the first fruits of the harvest." The holiday lasts seven days (this was the first), with each day dedicated to one of the seven principles of Kwanzaa—unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, coöperative economics, purpose, creativity, faith. On each of the seven days, a candle is lit, and gifts are exchanged. While Vann talked, seven small children came onto the stage and each lit a candle. Kwanzaa is a family holiday, Vann explained, dedicated to the veneration of elders and ancestors. "For your Kwanzaa setting, put out one ear of corn for each child you have," he told parents. "If you educate your children correctly in the seven principles, they won't turn on you when they become teen-agers, the way they do today."

Preventing teen-age boys from turning on their parents is, in fact, Vann's day job. He works across the street from the Elks Club at the Dixwell Community House, known as the Q House, where he runs a "rites of passage" program called Simba (Swahili for "lion"). The Q House, which was founded in 1924 to give black children—who in those days were forbidden to use the Y.M.C.A.—a place to play, today offers classes and workshops as well as sports. The Simba program is based on African initiation rituals. It was started a couple of years ago, when a group of twelve-year-old boys began coming each afternoon to the Q House, where Vann helped them with their homework, taught them African and African-American history, and, because he is working, he says, against a terrific current of peer pressure on the boys *not* to be good students, tried to offer them another model for black manhood. Not one of the boys in the program last year had a father living at home. Vann, who is twenty-four years old and a graduate of Brown University, takes the group to shows and museums in New York City as well as in New Haven. When I asked him how the Simba program differed from traditional organizations like the Boy Scouts, he said that it emphasizes not only African culture but sex education, and tries to shape the boys' attitudes toward women—confronting the contempt they learn from peers, from pop music, and, often, from their families, and trying to replace it with respect. At the end of the year, the boys in the program are ritually welcomed to manhood—but Vann, heedful of the constant perils of inner-city adolescence, is now expanding Simba so that boys can participate until they finish high school.

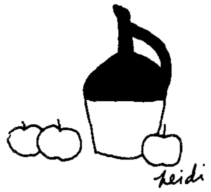
At the Kwanzaa celebration, Vann was joined on the stage first by Mr. Houston, who made all members of the audience hold hands, close their eyes, and listen to his poetry, and then by Muata Langley, another young activist, who wore a blue dashiki and matching bandanna and spoke of the importance of remembering one's ancestors. Langley publicly thanked his own late grandfather and great-grandfather for their contributions to his family, and invited the audience to praise their ancestors.

"My great-great-grandmother—Matilda Crump Pierce!" a woman shouted.

"My grandfather—Wilbur H. Knight, Jr.!" another woman called.

Langley repeated each name, affirming the contribution of each to the community, and Roger Vann said that people should really rely on their forebears whenever the stress of modern life got to be too much. "Call on Malcolm, or Martin, or your grandpa," he urged. On the wall behind the stage, alongside a huge American flag and a banner proclaiming the hall to be the Pocahontas Temple, No. 55, of the I.B.P.O.E.W., hung three framed photographs of elderly black men wearing white fezzes. These, I assumed, were leading local Elks from bygone days: ancestors. (The initials stand for the Improved Benevolent Protective Order of Elks of the World, and the "Improved" is significant because membership in the B.P.O.E., the national Elks organization, is still restricted to white American males.)

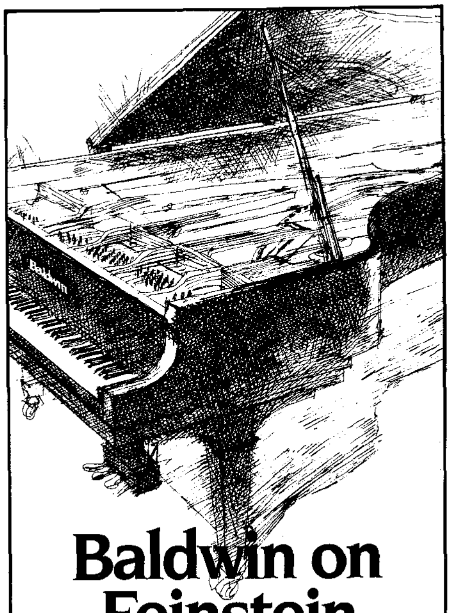
Meanwhile, most of the living elders of the community were downstairs, in the basement of the Elks Club, at the bar. The Elks basement is, as bars go, a great one. In fact, when people in Dixwell and Newhallville speak of the Elks, they usually mean the bar, which is spacious and well appointed, has a dance floor, and accommodates an unending stream of parties, dances, and benefits. (Beulah Morgan attends her share of these.) And even on a cold weekday afternoon, with the dance floor in darkness, I find fifteen or twenty Elks, all men in their fifties or sixties or seventies, bellied up to the bar itself, which is long and dim and warm, in the classic American style. Some of the drinkers are wearing phone-company coveralls; others are clearly retired. An old man with a gravel laugh is telling a story about how he once outwitted the police in Orange, Connecticut—and everybody listening recalls how dangerous it was, back in the forties and fifties, for a black man even to drive through Orange—while two old friends down the bar argue Baptist Church politics. Every time someone comes in, pulling off his hat and coat and rubbing his cold hands together, a small welcoming wave of jokes and greetings breaks in his direction. The Rev Kev may come in—an apparition from another era, with his braids and bright robes—working the bar like a politician, slapping backs and naming names. Rev Kev and the bar regulars have had their differences—in the summer, when the bar basically moves out into the Elks Club parking lot, he has told the members that their public drinking sends the wrong message to the community's youth, who are forever being harangued about drugs and alcohol—and yet the regulars' relations with the youth director are generally good. The Elks bar is a haven, a throwback, where the self-consciousness of Afrocentrism is unknown, and the hip-hop beat of angry youth is rarely, if ever, heard, and reminiscence rules.



Nostalgia is rampant in black New Haven. Everyone over forty remembers when the housing projects were well maintained, with managers living on the premises, and with tiny lawns and flower gardens in front of the ground-floor units; the maintenance office in Elm Haven even kept a lawnmower for tenants to use. Down at the Elks, middle-aged men recall with astonishment the innocent sorts of mischief they once pursued: robbing a neighbor's cherry tree; getting a wino to buy a half pint of brandy for a whole group of boys to share. There was marijuana around, but it was associated with visiting bandleaders, "hopheads." Heroin began to appear in the late fifties, but even the junkies in New Haven are nostalgic. They recall a camaraderie, a time when dealers were just supporting their own habits, when there was little violence, and drugs were advanced to users who could not pay. The cocaine boom of the eighties, the rise of violent posses, and the devolution of street dealing onto younger and younger boys have made the addict's world a far colder, more frightening place. "Scoring these days is like going to a convenience store," an ex-addict told me. "A *dangerous* convenience store." These new, young dealers are heartless, the addicts say. Hearing that, I remembered a New Haven high-school counsellor saying, "Bottom line: these kids hate adults." Apparently, there are few adults the young drug dealers hate more than their own customers.

In reality, New Haven's ghetto was always a tough place, full of deprivation and suffering. Even so, it is not nostalgic bunk that the factory jobs have disappeared, or that the streets were once vastly safer, or that there was once a great deal more in the way of organized after-school activity for teen-agers. Recreation centers have closed; sports leagues have folded. The collapse of the city's tax base after the flight of the middle class is usually blamed for the loss of city services and facilities, but it is also widely agreed that there are fewer adults prepared to work with children—to coach teams or teach classes or referee games—than there once were. "Reason is, everybody who works nowadays works *two* jobs," a white-haired Dixwell Elk told me.

And yet much of black New Haven, old and young, was galvanized in mid-1989—by a mayoral campaign. In the Democratic primary (Democrats in the city outnumber Republicans ten to one, so their primary is the main event), an Italian-American-dominated party machine put up an Italian-American candidate against John Daniels, a five-term state senator seeking to become New Haven's first African-American mayor. Although Daniels is a moderates' moderate—and, on racial matters, a staunch integrationist—the city's young black activists, Rev Kev and Roger Vann and their friends, decided to work for him. They expanded a previous voter-registration project, adding three thousand names, most of them African-Ameri-



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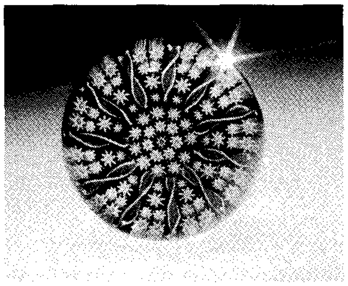

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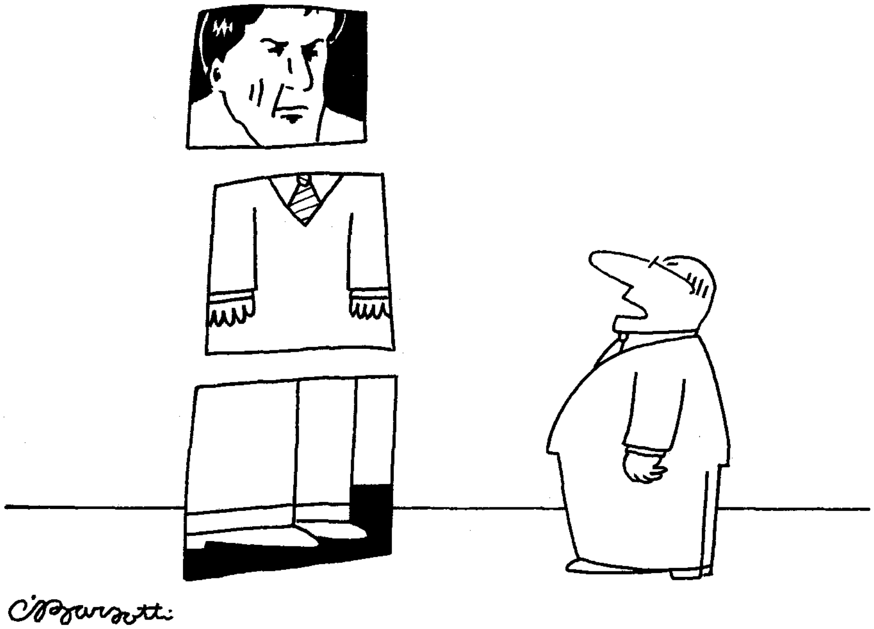

"Just go home and change, Worthington, and spare me any more talk about postmodernism."

cans under the age of twenty-five, to the city's rolls. They also spearheaded a fierce effort to get out the vote, and, when Daniels won, were generally believed to have made a crucial difference. Though Daniels received support from white and Hispanic voters, his election was plainly the latest chapter of a century-long story in New Haven politics—in urban American politics generally—in which successive immigrant groups have replaced their ethnic predecessors in City Hall. Certainly Daniels could be expected to devote special attention to the problems of the city's black youth.

Daniels can also be expected to be held up as an example to every black child in New Haven. He grew up in the Elm Haven projects himself. He was a school sports star, was New Haven's "Boy of the Year" for 1954, and attended Villanova University on an athletic scholarship. He even still finds time to referee football games.

And yet John Daniels' election does not herald the social and economic rise of his people, the way the election of Irish and Italian mayors in New Haven did. Blacks have always faced far more daunting obstacles than have European immigrants to America, and now the structure of economic opportunity itself has changed, abruptly and profoundly. Middle-class blacks may be only marginally more vulnerable to these changes than middle-class whites, but poor blacks are being economically slaughtered. Between 1969 and 1986, the real wages of poor black males in America declined by twenty per cent. In such circumstances, even a John Daniels may be able to understand the attractions of the underground economy. In February, Daniels' younger brother, Robert, was arrested for selling two hundred dollars' worth of cocaine to an undercover police officer.

"I NEVER vote," Anjelica says, making it sound almost as if her non-registration were a matter of principle. At the same time, she is pleased that John Daniels has been elected mayor. "Maybe he can *do* something," she says. Anjelica has never heard of Kwanzaa, or the Simba program, and all she knows about Timbuktu is that it's a long way away.

Anjelica knows telephones, though, and simple computer programming, and I was glad of that when, one January morning, I called Terry to confirm plans for a meeting at their apartment and he told me they were no longer living on Wallace Street. They had been forced to flee, he said, after his mother called the police on the Puerto Rican people upstairs. The nightly blows and screams from the Puerto Ricans' apartment had reached homicidal levels, Terry said, and when the police finally hauled away the boyfriend of the woman who lived there Anjelica and he got a nasty scare. Despite being bloody, handcuffed, shirtless, and barefoot in the snow, the Puerto Rican fought his captors valiantly, meanwhile swearing mortal vengeance on everyone in earshot. As the one who had called the police, Anjelica immediately saw the unwisdom of being at home if and when he was released, so she and her sons were staying with friends in West Haven. How had my call found them? "Total Phone," Terry said. Anjelica, he explained, subscribed to a de-luxe package of phone services, and she knew how to program the family phone so that calls could be forwarded wherever she happened to be.

It is some weeks later now, and Anjelica and her sons are back on Wallace Street; the upstairs batterer is reportedly still in jail. I have stopped in to see Terry, who is not home. Although the television and radio are both playing, and Anjelica herself invited me inside, I suspect I woke her from an afternoon nap, so I haven't taken a seat. Instead, I'm leaning awkwardly against the refrigerator, asking interviewlike questions about voting and the Q House, while Anjelica sits at the table in a baby-blue bathrobe, smoking a cigarette and looking sallow and weary. Buddy's at school, she says dully.

The phone rings. It's Beulah. I gather from the ensuing conversation that Anjelica's data-entry skills are in demand at the dentist's office where Beulah works. While Beulah was in the hospital, the dentist's computer lost a batch of files. Now Beulah is back on the job, and Anjelica has been asked to come in and work, off the books, retyping the lost files. This conversation appears to be doing wonders for Anjelica's mood. "I can probably come in tomorrow," she says, sounding officious and overbooked but looking pleased and proud. Anjelica has a vivid, mischievous, missing-bicuspid smile, which she flashes in my direction as she talks to her mother. All Anjelica has ever needed, I think suddenly, is to be needed, to have her skills valued. It's not true, of course. She has needed—and not got—much more than that. And when she has been needed—by Terry, for instance—she has usually, according even to her, been too busy getting high to perform.

After she gets off the phone, we talk briefly about Terry's slang. Anjelica says she doesn't understand half the things that come out of his mouth. I say our parents probably felt the same way about us, and she agrees, with a short laugh. "But every generation gets worse," she says.

I ask what she means.

"That older generation, they cared better," she says. "They had hearts. They communicated better than we do. That's why these older couples stay together." Anjelica studies her cigarette. "It's the drug world," she says, finally. "It took over the whole world. There's nothing left. This is the end."

We segue, somehow, into birth control. I ask Anjelica what she's told Terry on the subject.

"I give him condoms, and I tell him to use 'em," she says. "And he does use 'em, on all the girls except Lakeeda. He just won't use 'em on her, I don't know why."

Recalling how delighted Anjelica has seemed about Terry and Lakeeda's romance, and how much, according to Terry, she likes Lakeeda, I wonder aloud how she would feel if Lakeeda were to get pregnant.

"Uh-*uh*," Anjelica says. "Uh-*uh*. I'm too young to be a grandmother."

Anjelica still looks sleepy. I ask her to tell Terry I came by, and leave. But the image of her as a grandmother—or, rather, of her insisting that she's too young to be any such thing—stays with me and, a few days later, resurfaces. Terry and I are driving in Newhallville. It's a warm, snowmelt morning. Terry points out two people walking on the roadside up ahead. His mother and his Aunt Darla, he says. I would have taken them both for teen-agers. Darla is a head taller than Anjelica, who has to skip and trot to keep up as they stride along. Both wear baggy denim jackets and sunglasses. Anjelica also wears huge gold earrings, and a baseball cap with an extra-long bill, which makes her look like a street urchin from another era—the seventies, perhaps, or the twenties. She does not look, in any case, old enough to be a mother, let alone a grandmother. Terry rolls down his window and shouts at his mother and aunt, "What you two doing out here this time of day?" He points at them, they point at him, everybody laughs, and we all keep moving.

"They do look like they should be in school," I say. Terry does not disagree.

When I ask Terry about birth control, he seems less embarrassed about it than I am. He confirms that he and Lakeeda do not use condoms. "I love her too much," he says. In fact, he says, she may be pregnant already. "You see how I'm always sleeping all the time? That's because when she get pregnant you get her symptoms. So if you see me getting all kinds of strange craving—well, that's it, then we know for sure."

How does Terry feel about the possibility that Lakeeda is pregnant?

"I'm too young to be a father," he says.

But he seems less opposed than ambivalent. The responsibilities of parenthood are no doubt daunting, but the allure of a child to call his own, and of a permanent connection to Lakeeda and Tyrone, may, if I know Terry, often be more real.

Lakeeda turns out not to be pregnant, though, and when she and I talk she makes it clear that she is not leaving such things to chance. "I already have one baby," she says. "I know what's involved."

Lakeeda is two years older than Terry, but she seems older than that. She has a deliberate, Southern manner, with a very high, very soft voice. Though she wears a lot of gold, the effect it creates on her is less teen-age trashy than African aristocratic: when her dark, full, beautifully molded face is framed by gold it becomes more grave and imposing still. Solidly built and not tall, Lakeeda presents a sharp physical contrast to the lithe reed Terry. She also presents a scholastic contrast. Despite Tyrone, she graduated with her original high-school class this spring, having kept up her studies through a program for teen mothers. What is more, during her senior year she won a college scholarship in a statewide art competition.

Lakeeda and Terry have been an item since last September, and yet she only recently discovered the true difference in their ages; Terry had, with a little help from Anjelica, managed to add a couple of years to his. That is not a trifling concern to Lakeeda. It seems to explain a great many things—why, for instance, Terry sometimes seems to her like a little brother. At the same time, Terry is more like a father to

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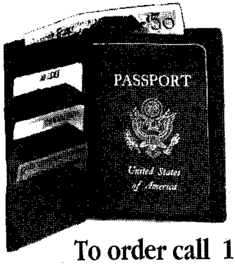

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Tyrone than Tyrone's real father is, and his devotion to the boy makes up for a lot.

Terry finds absolutely everything about Tyrone charming. "He do the grownedest things," Terry tells me. "Like I gave him a baseball, and we was playin' with it last night, and he said, 'You gave me this baseball. How come you playin', too?' He's a little *man*. Sometimes he make me wanna cry." Terry's absorption in Tyrone is so intense that I often think it borders on identification. In the Wallace Street apartment one afternoon, Terry tells me about how, when he was small, he used to love to pull the blankets over his head and just lie in bed all day, not asleep but safe inside a little blanket world. "That was my favorite thing," he says, with a relish suggesting that it might still be pretty high on his list. "One of these days," he goes on, "I'm gonna unplug the phone, and lock the door, and shut the drapes, and just lie in bed in here all day, just sleep and sleep, and not let nobody bother me."

I note down this fantasy with the same kind of embarrassment I feel asking questions about birth control. None of it is my business; all of it is of interest. Why people are ever willing to share their intimate relationships and inner lives with a stranger is itself a mystery. I sometimes wonder if Terry and his family offer me stories and insights simply in the hope that I will make sense out of their lives. But anomalies abound, and the contradictions of character elude neat definition. While I am scrawling "circle of love" and "replacement family" alongside notes from a conversation with Terry about Lakeeda and Tyrone, he telephones Lakeeda. She is asleep, her mother says. Terry hangs up the phone and jumps to his feet. He needs to go downtown immediately, he announces. The coast is clear for him to "see a couple of my sneak tips," he says.

I give him a ride downtown. His destination is the Chapel Square Mall, off the New Haven Green. We get stuck in traffic two blocks east of the Green, and Terry jumps out to walk, thanking me with a quick double-clutch handshake and setting off. Traffic starts to move, slowly, and I find myself keeping pace with Terry, who does not see me as he moves along the sidewalk toward the Mall. He is in a good mood, and he cuts through the crowd on the sidewalk with a vivid, rising step. I notice other pedestrians shying from him, and suddenly I see him through the eyes of an elderly white woman with a shopping bag who grimaces and braces herself as Terry sweeps past her. He does not look in her direction—his eyes are fixed on the Mall ahead—but he is a young black male, strong and fast, in a parka and sneakers and a ski cap, and that's all that the woman needs to see to feel a wave of fear. That's all, I realize, that most of us need to see.

THE Chapel Square Mall has been the hangout of choice for New Haven's teen-agers since it was built, in the nineteen-sixties. Covering two large blocks in the heart of the city, it was built as the centerpiece of a vast urban-renewal project that filled ninety-six acres of downtown New Haven and included a nineteen-story hotel, a fourteen-story office building, and a colossal parking garage—the garage designed by Paul Rudolph, the chairman of the Yale Department of Architecture. At the time of the Mall's construction—in the brief era of federal support for urban renewal—New Haven was a leader among American cities, winning so much support that while John Lindsay's New York was being called Fun City, New Haven was known as Fund City. Richard Lee, New Haven's mayor from 1954 to 1970, was a pioneering advocate of urban renewal, and the city's cause was not hurt in Washington by Lee's friendship with President John F. Kennedy. "Our goal is a slumless city—the first in the nation," Lee declared, and he set a deadline for achieving that goal: 1969. And yet, for all its achievements (Project Head Start, the single most successful program in the War on Poverty, was inspired in New Haven) and national renown (in 1964, Willard Wirtz, the Secretary of Labor, pronounced New Haven to be already "the greatest success story in the history of the world"), New Haven's urban-renewal effort produced few happy results. Like slum-clearance projects across the country, it displaced far more poor people—in New Haven, one-fifth of the population was uprooted between 1956 and 1974—than it ever provided new housing. The social and economic forces that were increasing segregation and concentrating poverty in American central cities in the nineteen-seventies and nineteen-eighties were simply too powerful to be countered by the increasingly modest programs offered against them. The Chapel Square Mall, Richard Lee's pride and joy at the time it was built, never had a chance of spearheading an urban-retail renaissance, as it was meant to do. When we spoke earlier this year, Lee bitterly described the present-day Mall as "a junk shop."

That is harsh. It is true that Lee was unable to persuade Saks Fifth Avenue, Lord & Taylor, or Brooks Brothers to open a branch in New Haven, leaving it to a slightly forlorn Macy's to anchor the south end of the Mall. But the Mall itself has had two face-lifts since its construction—"each time adding another layer of mauve," a longtime patron told me—and it can certainly hold its head up among American shopping malls. The artificial waterfall is nicely lighted, the air is stunningly sweet, anthemic jazz echoes from every floor tile, and the two levels of shops enjoy near-complete tenancy. At the north end of the Mall, overlooking the New Haven Green, is a complex of fast-food stands known as Picnic on the Green, which, with its patio furniture, retro-neon signs, and stands named 1 Potato 2, Everything Yogurt, and Wannacookie, is a fine example of what might be called the Organic Yesteryear style in mall design.

The teen-agers who throng the Mall each afternoon tend to collect around the fast-food stands, which tend to be staffed by their friends, but they also promenade constantly up and down the Mall. Perhaps the music stores and the cheap T-shirt stands that seek to appeal to the teen-agers are what cause Richard Lee to call the Mall a junk shop. In any case, the owners of many Mall businesses consider the youth hordes a problem—believing, among other things, that they scare off adult customers. So the superintendent of New Haven's schools has been trying to persuade the city's bus system to alter its routes—the present routes insure that hundreds of teen-agers must change buses downtown on their way home from school—in such a way that students will be delivered directly to their neighborhoods. The superintendent told me that the Mall's businessmen are so enthusiastic about this idea that in exchange for his efforts they may even be willing to contribute money to the development of

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after-school programs at the schools.

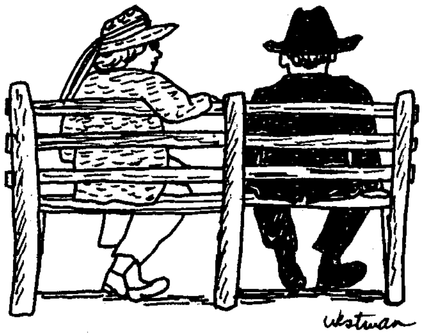
The teen-agers at the Mall probably do scare off customers. The courthouse steps where the Christmas shootout occurred are visible from Wannacookie. And the posses are active around the Mall—Terry told me that he must avoid the Mall at certain hours, when K.S.I. is likely to be there and his allies in the Ville are not. But the posse wars have never surfaced inside the Mall, and for an adult visitor the place, even at the height of the afternoon adolescent swarm, actually holds zero physical menace. Oafish boys in bomber jackets take photographs of each other posing with blushing girls eating ice-cream cones. An old wino does his imitation of Lee Marvin in "Cat Ballou" while a security guard gives him the bum's rush. White teen-agers in heavy-metal drag promenade alongside black teen-agers in hip-hop drag with no evidence of tension.

There *is* real menace in the Mall. It just happens to be impalpable, and its objects are the teen-agers themselves. The Mall is an extremely tightly controlled environment. Everything is packaged and stamped, fragrant and bright, alluring and on offer—except that if you loiter or linger or seem to be doing anything other than shopping the security guards descend on you. As hangouts for teen-agers, shopping malls could scarcely be worse chosen: they are a sealed system, a universe in which consumption is the only value. In New Haven, the constellations of this pallid heaven bear names like Marianne, Dress Barn, Paul Harris, Bogey's, Caren Charles, Champs Sports. Shearling-lamb coats and yellow leather shirts hang spotlit in the display windows, and their hefty prices form major markers of power and worth in the captive world of adolescents circulating in the Mall. And for pure purchasing power, of course, no one can compete with the drug dealers.

There are merchants in New Haven who discourage the custom of drug dealers. Body & Sole, a sporting-goods store on Chapel Street, half a block west of the Mall, has a large sign in its window: "If You Deal Drugs, We Don't Want Your Business! Spend Your Money Somewhere Else!" Wally Grigo, the owner of Body & Sole, says, "You can't tell someone, 'You're a drug dealer, I won't sell you shoes.' But you can hope to insult them, so they won't come in, and you can send a message to other kids—that not all the merchants in town are bending over to service the dealers, that the hypocrisy stops here. Drug dealers are *not* legitimate business people. They're killing their own communities, and I'm not going to profit from them." Grigo, who is wiry, ebullient, white, and thirty-odd, says that the worst reactions to the sign have come from his suppliers. "One guy, who is very high up in a major company, told me, 'Look, you're an inner-city store. You gotta hook up the drug dealers, really cater to them. You gotta shake four or five hundred dollars out of them every time they come in the store.' " A representative of another company told Grigo, "Drug dealers are half our business." The owners of other sporting-goods stores, he says, joke about the situation. "They say, 'Oh, this good customer is now in jail' or 'This good customer is dead.' " But when the signmaker saw the message he wanted for his window, Grigo says, he did the work for free. It seemed that the signmaker had been getting a lot of business himself from dealers, who wanted custom lettering for their cars and, when the cars got shot up in gunfights, wanted the lettering done again, and he was feeling guilty about doing it for them.

On Whalley Avenue, which divides the Ville's territory from that of K.S.I., I noticed an automobile dealer displaying a silver 1989 Porsche Speedster. Price: $92,000. I asked a young salesman who might be expected to buy such a car, and he laughed. "We get these very young guys coming in here with these huge wads of cash and their grandmothers to sign the papers," he said. Typically, such a customer would buy a new Mercedes or Audi, he said, paying between twenty thousand and seventy thousand dollars, with fifty per cent down in cash.

A few blocks away, also on Whalley, I dropped into a water-bed shop called Rubber Match. In the back of the shop, which was crammed with merchandise and loud with acid rock and smelled of incense, stood the proprietor. He was a bearded, middle-aged white man, and he was busy telling a female customer all about a cruise he had recently taken to Mexico and Aruba, and then about a trip to Atlantic City he was planning. The shelves around him overflowed with off-color novelties, including camouflage-patterned condoms, and with the apparatus of the drug trade: water pipes, crack pipes, triple-balance-beam scales, jars of lactose and mannitol (for adulterating cocaine), and glassine envelopes of all sizes, complete with color codings. While I browsed, a tall black teen-ager wearing a baseball cap rushed in. He bought a large jar of lactose, paying from a fat wad of cash, then ran back outside, hopped into a new, root-beer-colored Ford Explorer minivan, and roared off with the minivan's stereo booming "Gangsta Gangsta." "Gangsta Gangsta" is a hit song by a Los Angeles rap group called N.W.A. The initials in the group's name stand for Niggas With Attitude.



"I WAS chillin'," Terry says. "But then my homeboy come in March, and he shoot me up to get down with him."

Terry's homeboy, in this case, was Frank Black. Frank is several years older than Terry and has always, according to Anjelica, taken an avuncular interest in him. Frank had graduated from Hillhouse High and was living with his girlfriend and her infant son on Foote Street, in the Elm Haven projects. He was down with the Ville and was doing fairly well in the drug business, but he needed more street-level dealers. Boys under sixteen were preferred, because when they were arrested they were usually not charged as adults. Terry was fifteen, and bright. Frank offered him what amounted to a profit-sharing partnership. "He told me if he ever got to the top he would take me with him," Terry says. "He was going to get a 190, I was going to get a 190. A yellow 190 Mercedes-Benz."

Frank's sales outlet was an empty lot in Newhallville known as the Mudhole. It was perilously close to Beulah's house, but it had such an evil reputation in the neighborhood that Terry hoped he could evade detection simply by staying back in the weeds and trees, where respectable folk like his grandmother and her friends never ventured. The Mudhole is laid out brilliantly for drug dealing. Straddling a disused rail line running north from the old Winchester plant, it can be reached from either of two busy streets and is also a popular pedestrian shortcut. To the immediate south are housing projects. To the east is Shelton Avenue, where an old liquor store, an even older bar, called Sonny & Viv's, and a grimy little windowless gambling club called the Shelton Avenue Social Club (but usually known as Pepper's, or simply as the Mudhole) draw a crowd of grimy, drunken hangers-on, who help to disguise the goings on in the Mudhole itself. The customers at the Mudhole were virtually all local, which meant that many of them knew Terry—his own Aunt Darla, who lived behind Sonny & Viv's, was a regular—but they were used to buying from neighborhood children, and used to concealing the fact.

The volume of business in the Mudhole was, as it had been in Quinnipiac Terrace, phenomenal, and Terry's pay was even better. He no longer received a weekly salary but got a cut of the day's take—a cut that could come to as much as five hundred dollars. Frank ran his crew differently, too: there were no piss boys, as in Q Terrace, and there was little hierarchy. Terry was Frank's lieutenant, but he did not give orders to the other sellers or the lookouts. "We didn't even call them workers," Terry says. "We just say, 'They's down with us.' It was more like a big family. Everybody watch each other's back. If I see the police first, I yell 'Raise up!' That mean 'Get away from your bundle!' " The Mudhole was open for business from 9 A.M. to 9 P.M., and in the evenings Frank often brought around a bottle of brandy, which the boys drank with Coca-Cola. After a good day, Frank might bring Courvoisier, which the boys liked to drink straight from the bottle. Squalid as the Mudhole is, with its deep rubble of old tires, couches, baby carriages, and car parts, it really resembles nothing so much as a great children's haunt, and Terry had, in fact, been playing along the tracks there since he was small. Selling drugs was like playing hide-and-seek, but more exciting, more satisfying, more fun.

Frank's main traffic was in cocaine, which he brought in from New York

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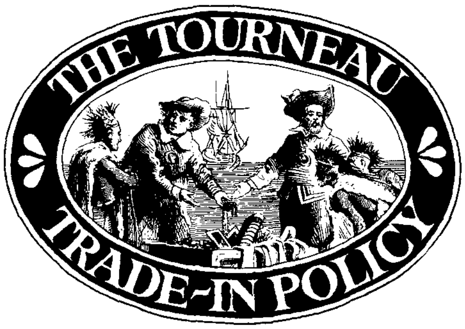

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City himself. When he first took Terry with him to New York—they rode the train to 125th Street, in Harlem—Terry was scared. "I almost dookied myself," he says. "But Frank just kept telling me, 'Act like you live here.' And he knew where to go, so things was O.K." They made regular trips to New York, buying four or five ounces of cocaine each trip, and paying five or six hundred dollars an ounce, then returning to New Haven, where they mixed the cocaine with lactose, packed it into small glassine bags, and sold it in the Mudhole for profits that ranged from a hundred and fifty to two hundred per cent. Learning the trade was easy, Terry says. "Whatever Frank did, I just did it the exact same way." The work itself could be hard, requiring long hours and constant vigilance; you never knew when the police might appear, in the Mudhole or in New York or on the train. Terry's favorite job was counting the take. "I got to flip the money," he says. "Fold it all up. Each crease, that's one hundred dollars. Get it all flipped, take my part, put it in my pocket, a nice fat bundle, go down to the Mall, and *play the girls*."

Playing the girls meant buying them clothes and jewelry—gold bracelets, necklaces, and earrings were especially appreciated, and the massive, staple-shaped "Jumbo" and "Colombo" door-knocker earrings could cost as much as four hundred dollars in the Chinese jewelry stores downtown—but it also meant "getting all geared down," as Terry puts it, himself. He bought silk shirts, leather shirts, Gucci sneakers, a Rolex watch. He became a regular customer at the tonier Mall shops, got gold caps to sheathe his teeth—"sparked my whole *mouth* out"—and took to wearing finely tailored Italian trousers. He bought clothes and jewelry for his male friends, too, and gave many gifts to his mother and Buddy, including a huge stuffed bear for Anjelica on Mother's Day.

Beulah was not so easy to please. When Terry gave her an expensive porcelain poodle on Mother's Day, "she just acted like it was nothin'," he says. Then she refused to let him pay to have her car repaired, even though it was giving her trouble. It seemed that a friend of Beulah's had seen Terry in the Mudhole after all, and had told his grandmother about it. "Then I was getting ready one night to go to Nick & Neil's," Terry says. "That's a teen club in Orange. I go there with my posse on Saturdays. So I was taking a bath, and she saw my clothes there. I had bought myself a *nice* little outfit—I bought my boy one, too—and she wanted to know where I got the money for it. I said my mother gave me the money, and she didn't say nothin'. But then I got dressed, and I said, 'Grandma, how do I look?' And she said, 'Like a drug dealer.' After that, she told me to get on out of her house."

Terry moved into the Elm Haven projects with Frank and his girlfriend and her son. "I was on my own," he says. "Nobody telling me what to do, nobody telling me when to come home." Although Frank and Terry had to come and go carefully—only Frank's girlfriend, whose rent was paid by public assistance, and her child were legal tenants—life on Foote Street was, in Terry's view, basically one long party. Even in this paradise, though, this world without adults, where sex, liquor, and money flowed freely, Terry and Frank and the crew worked hard, sometimes staying up all night to cut and bag cocaine. "Pour in some cut, stir it up, flip it, flip it, throw in some more rocks, stir it up," Terry says, showing the same pleasure in the production process that he shows when he talks about folding pizza boxes. "Take a dime-size amount—do it all by eye—bag it, staple it, shake it down. It take a couple hours to cut and bag an ounce. And if somebody fall asleep when you're baggin' you get to slap 'em. The sleep game, we call it. Slap!" Terry laughs. "Then, never mind if we work all night, only sleep one hour, we get up and go straight out to the block in the morning. Go make that money!"

As in other retail businesses, packaging and reputation were critical. Frank's crew was known as White Bag, and the quality of its product was well established. Other crews tried to distinguish their product by putting stars on the bags they sold. This, according to Frank, was unwise. The courts regarded stars on bags as evidence of the involvement of "organized crime," he said, and the sentences given to dealers arrested with star-marked bags were harsh. The question of arrest loomed larger in Terry's mind after he turned sixteen, in May, but business in the Mudhole thrived all spring and into the summer without any notable interruption by the police. There were close calls. Once, a police cruiser, complete with German shepherd, arrived without warning, and Terry had to flee across the back yards of Newhallville with the dog in pursuit. He cut his mouth in a fall while vaulting a fence, and he lost his Rolex watch, but he managed to get away, and that same evening he was back in the Mudhole, defiantly making crazy dollars.

Frank's crew sold marijuana—they called it "sess," or "Larry," and they made excellent profits from it just as long as they did not smoke too much themselves—but their best-selling item remained cocaine, which they marketed in powdered form. Crack, the smokable form of the drug, has not caught on widely in New Haven, seemingly because of rumors spread by local dealers that street crack may contain a lethal dose of rat poison. These rumors have been part of a fierce campaign to resist the incursion of Jamaican crack dealers from New York City into the New Haven market. (A similar campaign by New York dealers trying to prevent the incursion of Asian dealers selling a smokable form of methamphetamine known as ice is going on now, and includes the spreading of similar rumors among the city's users about the new drug's contents.) The resistance to the Jamaican dealers has also involved violence, including the murders of local dealers suspected of working with the Jamaicans, and the campaign seems to have been successful. Jamaican crack dealers dominate the cocaine trade in other Connecticut cities, such as Bridgeport, but remain a minor force in New Haven. "The Jamaicans are crazy," Terry says. "We just *crazier*." Most of the crack addicts in New Haven (who include Terry's Aunt Darla) continue to buy powder and make the crack themselves.

In Frank's crew, contempt for the customers was, if anything, even more virulent than it had been among the dealers in Q Terrace. The Mudhole was not a stop 'n' cop but a neighborhood concession, where everybody knew everybody else, and the desperation and degradation of the addicts were always on display. Again, all the baseheads were adults, and none of the young dealers used cocaine. Terry considered trying it once. "But Frank stopped me," Terry says. "He whipped

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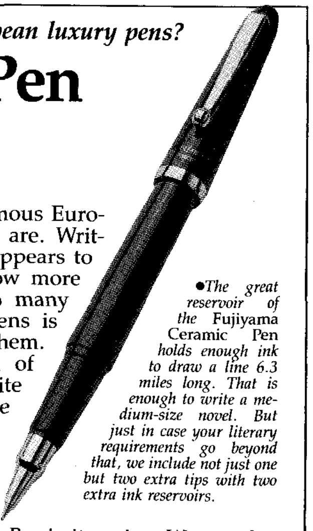

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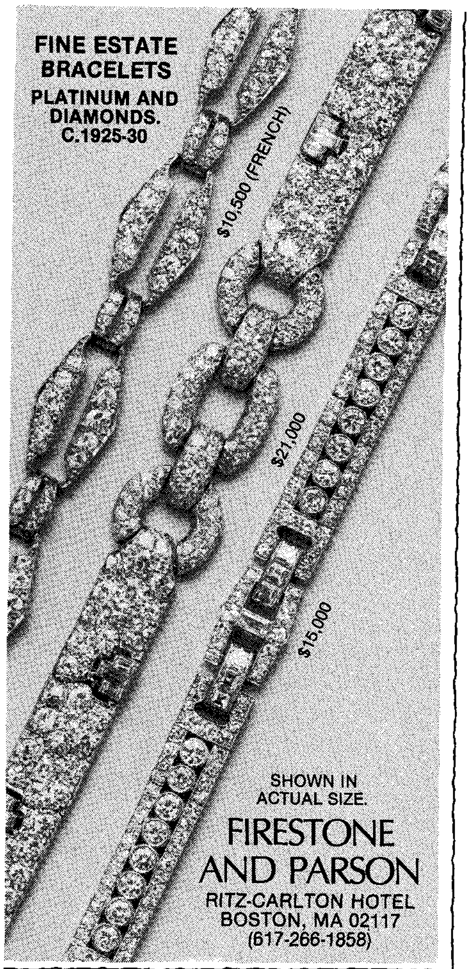

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my ass, and he said, 'We *see* what this stuff do to people.' He was right. I thank him for it."

Anjelica herself was apparently never a customer of Terry's. She quarrelled with Beulah after Beulah made Terry leave her house, though. She and Buddy had also been staying with Beulah, but now they moved out. Anjelica's caseworker found them a room at the Sleeping Giant Motel, a roadhouse six miles north of New Haven, while they waited for an apartment in town. A taxi ride to Sleeping Giant cost twenty-five dollars each way, but Terry still managed to visit them regularly, and he continued to shower both Buddy and his mother with gifts. He was not yet the family breadwinner—some of his fellow-dealers, including some even younger than he was, paid their mothers' rent and bought them cars—but Beulah disapproved of Anjelica's taking anything at all from her son. Anjelica worried about Terry's safety, especially after a rash of drive-by shootings and then a series of police sweeps on street dealers in June, but she accepted his gifts, including tuition money for a summer-camp program for Buddy. (Anjelica found other uses for this money, however, and Buddy never got to camp.)

Terry's father heard rumors that his son was dealing, and he expressed his disapproval to Terry. If he needed money, Peter said, he should simply ask for it. "Ask *him* for money?" Terry says, his voice sharp with disbelief. "I never did, and I never will. But, you know, I had *so much money* on me that day. If he had patted me down, he would have found it. And I would have said, 'Yeah, that's right, I'm out there. *I'm way, way out there.*' " In truth, Peter was disinclined to carry the matter any further. As he explained to me later, "There could be problems if I intervened in that sort of thing, and I've reached an age where I don't need problems." Among the problems he didn't need, he said, "there's violence, there's death." But the aspect of the drug world which seemed to bother Peter the most was its denizens' indifference to the resale value of luxury cars. "It just turns me off," he said, "seeing all these Mercedeses, Volvos, BMWs, Saab 9000s, with tinted windows, telephones, bubble windows. With all that customizing, those cars *are not going to sell.* The real society doesn't want any part of those cars."

Though the drive-by shootings and the posse wars were, for the most part, taking place elsewhere in New Haven, Frank's crew kept a pistol at the Mudhole for emergencies. Sometimes, particularly when he had been drinking, Frank liked to fire off a few rounds at the end of the evening. His notion was that the gunfire would bring the police, which it normally did, and that the police officers snooping around the Mudhole would scare off any other dealers who might be thinking of setting up shop after his crew quit for the night. Frank's gunplay was apparently unappreciated by nearby residents—especially when he fired a shotgun, as he sometimes did—but his crew's franchise at the Mudhole was uncontested. Quarrels with other drug dealers did, however, occasionally break out. One night, a member of Frank's crew was attacked in the Mudhole by another dealer, with a baseball bat. "He had messed up some of this nigger's money," Terry says. "But I didn't care about that. He was trying to hurt one of my boys. So I took the gun, and I unloaded a whole clip at him. Six shots. I didn't hit him, but he *ran.*"

News of this clash flew through Newhallville, and soon reached Anjelica by telephone out at Sleeping Giant. What she heard was that somebody had come after the Mudhole crew with a baseball bat, and that Terry had been firing a gun. She panicked. The last bus to New Haven had just passed Sleeping Giant. Anjelica ran down the road after it. And she kept on running, never quite catching the bus, mile after mile—all the way to the center of Hamden. Again, the bus pulled away without her. At that point, she gave up, and started trudging back to Sleeping Giant. But the story of Anjelica's frantic maternal rescue marathon made a big impression on Terry when he heard it. I've heard him repeat the story, and he tells it with almost as much pride and wonderment as Anjelica herself does.

—WILLIAM FINNEGAN

(This is the first part of a two-part article.)

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Macbeth II?

MUSICAL EVENTS

Castle on the Nile

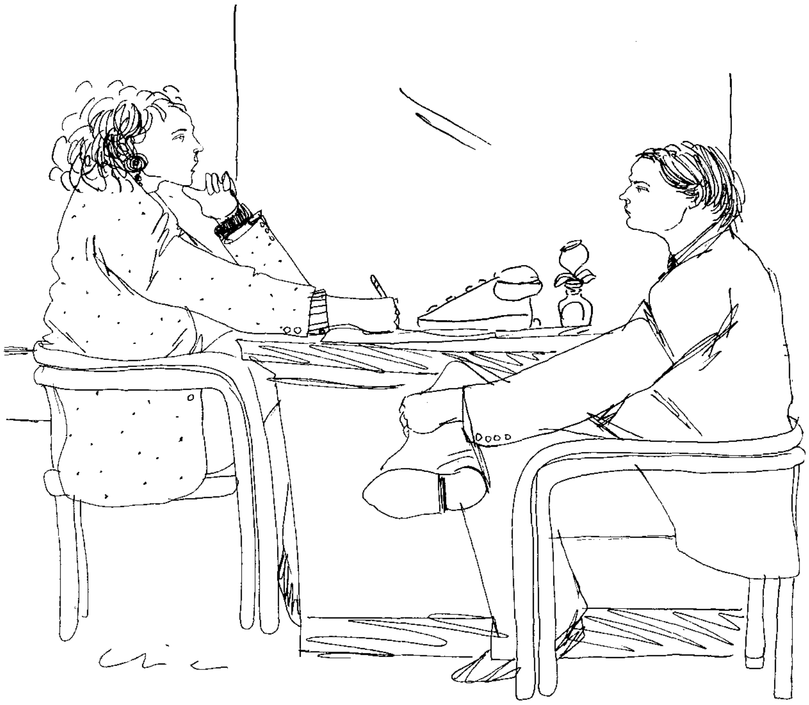
THE old charge against Rossini, that he turned out opera after opera to formula, and one much like another, has long since been dismissed. The Maggio Musicale productions of "Tancredi" and "Armida" in 1952, the studio presentation of "Elisabetta, Regina d'Inghilterra" that the RAI gave to the BBC in Elizabeth II's coronation year, 1953, and New York's concert "Otello" the following year provided the first evidence. The Rossini revival got under way, and Pesaro's Rossini Opera Festival clinched the case with the first modern stagings of "Maometto II" (1985) and "Bianca e Falliero" (1986), with "Ermione" (1987), and, this year, with "Ricciardo e Zoraide," the fifth of the nine serious operas that Rossini composed for Naples. "Ricciardo" appeared in 1818. It was played widely in its day, through Italy and in Vienna, Munich, Stuttgart, Budapest, Graz, Paris, London. (No American performance has been traced.) But before the Pesaro revival living ears had not heard the opera; the previous production seems to have been La Scala's in 1846. (Of Rossini's forty operas, only "Sigismondo" and "Eduardo e Cristina" now remain unrevived.) The libretto is by the Marchese Francesco Berio di Salsa, who two years earlier had been the poet of "Otello," and his source was the mock-heroic epic "Ricciardetto," by Niccolò Forteguerri, an eighteenth-century papal secretary. Forteguerri begins by announcing that his Muse "is no Daughter of the Sun, has no golden or ebon lyre, is a rough country girl, tralala-ing whatever comes into her head." Although Berio's libretto is serious, not playful, it retains traces of its origin. For example, the King of Nubia tells his wife, in tones of sweet reason:

> Zomira, once I was aflame for you, I cannot deny it; but now (don't be offended by the truth) my less lively fire prompts other feelings about you. . . . Don't worry. In Africa I am allowed to change my affections at whim . . . and yet I don't want to banish you from the throne. I merely want your spirit, ever constant and true to me, to share my glory with another woman.

That other woman is present, and the lines introduce a tense trio.

The libretto, contemned by most earlier commentators, proves to be a coherent and effective exotic drama. The scene is Dongola, the Nubian capital, on the upper Nile, and the action unfurls amid the historical struggles of native Nubians, European invaders, and Arab invaders for control of the kingdom. Ricciardo, the principal tenor, is a Christian paladin, the leader of a European expeditionary force. Agorante, the "other principal tenor," is the King of Nubia. They both love Zoraide, the soprano; she is the daughter of Ircano, the bass, an Arab chieftain who has made himself master of much of Agorante's kingdom. Queen Zomira, the contralto, completes a quintet of principals, and there is another, more-than-subaltern tenor role: Ernesto, the Christian Ambassador. The 1818 principals were Isabella Colbran-Rossini (Zoraide), Giovanni David (Ricciardo), Andrea Nozzari (Agorante), Michele Benedetti (Ircano), and Rosmunda Pisaroni (Zomira), all of them famous in Rossini annals. Yet of solo numbers the long opera contains only two cavatinas, one for each tenor; a slight aria, almost an *aria di sorbetto*, for Zomira; and, embedded in the finale, a gran scena for Zoraide that modulates into "rescue music" (Ricciardo and Ircano are about to be executed), leaving no applause point for the prima donna. The rest is ensemble, including three duets, the trio, and a quartet. Rossini used a stage band for the first time, and used it with exuberant invention—in the opening sequence, where the overture runs straight into the action, and in the finales of both acts. (The following year, he added a stage band to a revival of "Mosè in Egitto," and thereafter stage bands became a lively ingredient of most Italian serious operas.) To accompany an offstage women's chorus during the trio, he used an offstage septet of four clarinets, two bassoons, and a harp. The same ensemble, plus a solo flute, accompanies an offstage women's chorus during Zoraide's prison scene, and this is an astonishing episode. In the "Elisabetta" prison scene, Rossini had essayed an instrumental depiction of Leicester's musings before he voices them; here the chorus seems to be voicing one strand of Zoraide's inner dialogue while she, accompanied by the pit orchestra, indignantly rejects these unworthy thoughts of surrender that cross her mind. Throughout the opera, there are choice instrumental inventions and delicate harmonic strokes. (Of what Rossini score is that not true?) There are also, to be sure, some passages where decorations—twiddles—break out in a near-automatic way. It is the artists' business to make such episodes expressive.

Artistically, Pesaro



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has taken a turn for the better. International festivals are in artistic danger when they become smart and fashionable. I watched Salzburg in the postwar decades—occupied Salzburg when first I knew it, with scrip dollars the principal currency, Furtwängler the principal conductor, and prices that a poor student could afford, just—turn from a place of adventure into a luxury showroom for stars, with a whiff of record-company contracts ever present. Bayreuth is hardly the serious, popular festival that Wieland and Wolfgang Wagner reanimated in 1951, although the spirit of the place and the seriousness of the repertory do insure a certain decency. As the Pesaro festival caught on, there was a growing dichotomy between the ardent, scholarly activity of the Rossini Foundation there, which provides the festival performers with clean, true texts of what the composer wrote, and performances at which highly paid sacred monsters were on display, bruiting forth as loudly as possible with small regard for the special qualities of the work in question. The staging of "Ricciardo"—directed by Luca Ronconi and designed by Gae Aulenti—was tainted by chic, it is true, but the cast was a team of intelligent young or youngish artists with a clear idea of what Rossini needs and a fair ability to supply it.

William Matteuzzi, the Ricciardo, came a cropper in the *Times* a few years ago when he undertook the "Barbiere" Almaviva at the Met. I did not hear that. At Pesaro, he gave delight with his firm, fleet coloratura, his shapely phrases, his readiness to be gentle, elegant, melting at times, and with high C's and D's, and even a high F, that were not painful to hear and were never needlessly loud. Pesaro's Teatro Rossini is a five-tier horseshoe house, seating about nine hundred; voices and words come across clearly, and no one need shout. Chris Merritt, originally billed for Agorante, had withdrawn; the Texan tenor Bruce Ford learned the role on short notice and sang it pretty well. Gloria Scalchi, the Zomira, was a discovery: a coloratura contralto sure through a range of two and a half octaves, with a fluent, pleasing voice and considerable stage presence. (The program book announced that in New York she will be taking another Pisaroni role, Andromache in "Ermione.") The Zoraide was June Anderson. No one since Joan Sutherland has been better equipped to fill the Colbran roles. Miss Anderson has a strong, agile, healthy voice; she is evidently intelligent; she sings as well as anyone around, and better than most. Yet she is being slow to fulfill the high promise of her City Opera appearances and her Carnegie Hall Semiramide in the early eighties. Something seems to be missing. She leaves one unmoved. Hard to define what's wrong: perhaps a combination of reluctance to feel a role so generously that every gesture, vocal or physical, tells of character; an insufficient appreciation of the expressive colors of words; and a curious inattention to making whole phrases—not just her best notes within the phrases—beautiful. She communicated no heart-and-soul involvement with Zoraide's plight. If she secretly despises Rossini's music, she might reapproach it by way of Gluck's Alcestis, Iphigenia, Armida. The potential is still great, but she seems in need of artistic guidance. Perhaps she will receive it before her Met Semiramide, due in December.

An eleventh-century historian described Dongola as already a large city with many churches, fine houses, and wide streets. Alessandro Sanquirico presented it as such in his designs for the Scala première of the opera (which were reproduced in the Pesaro program). But in Pesaro the curtain rose on a rolling prospect of sand dunes—from behind which row upon row of blackface choristers then popped up. Miss Aulenti, best known for the installation of the Musée d'Orsay, made her name as a designer of store displays, and there was a shopwindow or penny-in-the-slot-peepshow quality to her cute, ingenious décor, with its elevator-borne props or people, its toy dinghies, its dinky carpets. It was very beautifully lit, by Sergio Rossi. Mr. Ronconi's staging was rather silly. Ricciardo, required to disguise himself as an African guide to the Ambassador, did so by donning an Edwardian motoring veil. Riccardo Chailly conducted the Bologna Comunale Orchestra precisely, crisply, but without much grace.

OTHER Pesaro events were a revival of the early comedy "La Scala di Seta"; an entertainment, "Atelier Nadar," devised by Bruno Cagli, the artistic director of the Foundation, to present "Péchés de Vieillesse" in a dramatic context; four recitals (given by Aldo Ciccolini, Jeffrey Swann, Sergio Fiorentino, and Michele Campanella) to inaugurate an *intégrale*, spread over three years, of Rossini's abundant piano music; and an evening of cantatas. During his Naples years, Rossini wrote a handful of cantatas for Bourbon royal occasions. Almost unknown, they are generally dismissed as, for the most part, mere patchworks of preëxisting music. They are being edited by a band of young scholars at the Foundation, for the critical edition, and this year the earliest of them, "Le Nozze di Teti e di Peleo," had its first revival. Composed in 1816, it celebrated the wedding of Princess Maria Carolina to the Duke of Berry. (Nine years later, the widowed Duchess's fortitude was to be acclaimed in "Il Viaggio a Reims.") "Teti" was an elaborate scenic cantata, with a ballet (whose music, now lost, was not by Rossini) and an apotheosis in which, "at a sign from Jove, there is revealed a magic picture, painted by rays of light, showing the royal couple being paternally welcomed by the Most Christian King Louis XVIII, enthroned, while the dance continues and the chorus sings in an attitude of respectful joy." Pesaro presented the piece in concert form.

There is much borrowing in the score, particularly from "Il Barbiere," which had appeared in Rome two months earlier: Almaviva's big aria "Cessa di più resistere" reappears, assigned to Ceres (Colbran's role); in a chorus, the theme of the trio "Zitti zitti, piano piano" resumes its original shape—"With joy th'impatient husbandman," from Haydn's "The Seasons"—and acquires a blithe bassoon counterpoint. But there is also reworking and new music, and nothing is haphazard or lazily planned. "Teti" is a shapely and enjoyable work. Mariella Devia, the Ceres, was in good voice. Robert Gambill, the Peleus (David's role), was excellently clear and accurate, and he had an elegant command of phrasing and text. Kathleen Kuhlmann was an impressive Juno. Patricia Schuman, the Thetis, and Luca Canonici, the Jove (Nozzari's role), were able but less stylish. As a curtain-raiser Miss Schuman sang Rossini's early solo-and-chorus cantata "La Morte di Didone"; in the soprano range her voice became unpleasing and edgy. Alberto Zedda, who conducted,

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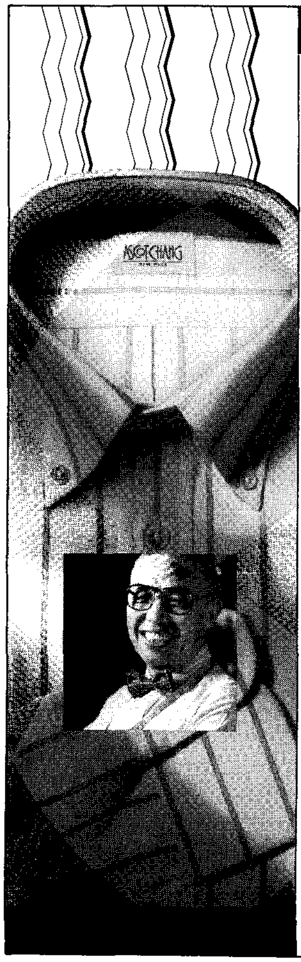

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had composed overexuberant cadenzas and variations.

A THEME of this year's Settimana Musicale Senese was Music and Cinema. "L'Assassinat du Duc de Guise" (1908), the first part of "Cabiria" (1915), René Clair's "Entr'acte" (1924), and Léger's "Ballet Mécanique" (1924) were projected while their scores—by Saint-Saëns, Pizzetti, Satie, and Antheil, respectively—were played live. The opening event was even more of a rarity: a performance of Nino Oxilia's film "Rapsodia Satanica" (1915), which has a score by Mascagni. The film, which lasts forty-five minutes, is a period piece, not a work of art to stir modern audiences, but in its day it was taken seriously, as a new kind of wordless lyric drama, comparable in some respects to the wordless dramas of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. The first performances were given in Rome's principal concert hall, the Augusteo, along with symphonic works conducted by Mascagni. The Siena performance was given in the medieval hall, formerly the seat of the Grand Council, which was transformed into a theatre in 1560. A production of "Cavalleria Rusticana" completed the bill.

Mascagni was initially engaged—for a hundred thousand lire and twenty-five per cent of the box-office—to collaborate with Enrico Ferri on a film about Garibaldi, but the project fell through. The composer told his wife that Ferri "is capable of no more than a chronicle of Garibaldi's life and cannot understand what I want: a true, proper poem, with realistic scenes and symbolic scenes, with apotheoses, with mythic visions, etc." Mascagni agreed instead—for seventy-five thousand lire and thirty per cent of the takings—to compose a score for Oxilia's already filmed "Rapsodia Satanica," provided that the last third of it was remade to suit his poetic and musical requirements. Stopwatch in hand and home projector beside him, he went to work.

The plot? Act I: Alba d'Oltrevita, wrinkled and gray, "death's pallid vestal," signs a pact with the Devil: youth and beauty in exchange for a renunciation of love. Act II: The young beauty goes walking through moonlit gardens, rowing on pleasant lakes, dancing in masquerades with the brothers Sergio and Tristano. Then Sergio presents an ultimatum: Unless by midnight you smile on me, I will kill myself. Tristano visits Alba to plead for his brother's life; Alba seduces him, while beneath her window Sergio shoots himself. One wrinkle appears on Alba's brow. Act III: Alba lives loveless, secluded, in her shuttered castle, the Castle of Illusions. Mephisto informs her that each moonlit night Tristano passes by to visit Sergio's mountaintop tomb, pausing on his way to gaze at the castle. She makes a decision, opens wide the castle, bestrews the rooms with flowers, and, like another Isolde, beckons to Tristano with her veil. In the words of Fausto Maria Martini's long *poema cinema-musicale*, published as the "libretto of the opera":

> Fulfilled was
> the pact. At the first kiss she was again
> death's pallid vestal;
> attaining death by the road of love,
> she donned her final diadem.

The actress Lyda Borelli gives an extravagant, somewhat absurd performance, amid drifts of chiffon and veils. The leering, putty-nosed Mephisto is ludicrous. The whole thing, breathing a spirit of late, decorative, d'Annunzian Wagnerismo, is a document of the time that also produced Montemezzi's "L'Amore dei Tre Re," Mascagni's "Parisina," Zandonai's "Francesca da Rimini." The score is an ambitious piece of work whose large structure is carefully fashioned; it includes numbers (a pavane, a scherzo), developments, reprises. Mephisto enters Alba's life with an insidious, jittery bassoon counterpoint to her rueful reflections; when she sits at the piano to play Chopin, the orchestra chimes in to reveal what she is thinking while she plays. But the music itself is mediocre, meritless. In Siena, it was played by the Russe Philharmonic, from Bulgaria—a regular guest at the Settimana Senese—conducted by Baldo Podic.

In "Cavalleria," Shirley Verrett was an earnest, diligent Santuzza, even if her beauty-parlor makeup and her bare feet were in odd contrast. The staging, by the filmmaker Mario Monicelli, was straightforward. The program book, amid much scholarly material, gave details of a hundred and seventy-eight complete recordings of "Cavalleria," forty-five of them published and the others in various archives. (Fiorenza Cossotto is the heroine of twenty-seven of them.) We live in an overdocumented age. —ANDREW PORTER

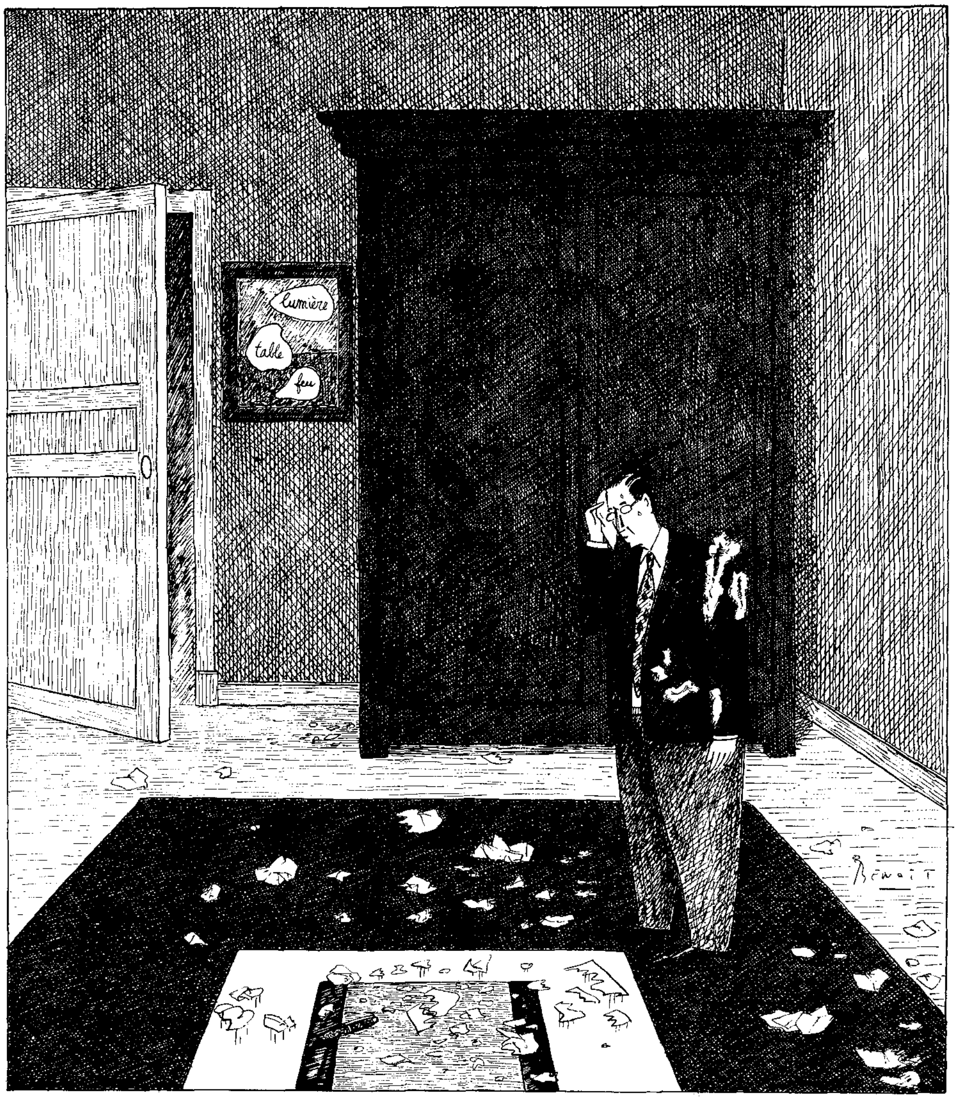
REFLECTIONS

AFTER COMMUNISM

WHEN I went to college, half a century ago, socialism seemed within easy grasp. Mainly, it would require the nationalization of the *Fortune* list of the five hundred leading industrial corporations, which would thereafter be administered by a Central Planning Board. Insofar as we students (and many of our professors) were quite certain that the interlocking directorates of those companies already constituted such a board, the transition did not seem daunting. Communism was a more distant prospect, but not unimaginably distant. Under socialism, society would ask each to contribute according to his ability and would reward each according to his contribution. Under Communism, each would also contribute according to his ability but would be rewarded according to his need. (In those days, we did not bother to say "his or her.") There were, of course, difficult problems to be solved, of which the most commonly mentioned was: Who would do the dirty work? The answer was that once dirty work was paid according to its social importance there would be no shortage of candidates for the job of miner or trash collector. Charles Fourier, the French utopian socialist, who predated Marx by a few decades, had a more imaginative answer: in his hotel-like socialist communities (rooms to fit every pocketbook), the dirty work would be done by children, who love getting dirty. I mention Fourier to show that we had some sense of humor about socialism. What we did not have was a sense of tragedy.

Socialism has been a great tragedy this century, its calamitous finale the collapse of Communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. I doubt very much whether socialism has now disappeared from history, but there is no doubt that the collapse marks its end as a model of economic clarity. Moreover, I suspect that its economic failure may haunt socialism longer than the pathologies of Communism. Early on, one could see that the Soviets were headed toward political disaster, but much of that disaster seemed attributable to the hopeless political heritage of Russian history, not to socialism per se. It was the economic side of the Russian collapse that came as a shock. The prodigies of Russian prewar industrialization appeared to be an incontrovertible argument for the capacity of a planned economic system to achieve growth, and the argument appeared to be confirmed by the spectacular performance of the Soviets during the years of reconstruction immediately following the Second World War. Thus, there may have been discomfiture but there was not much surprise when the Soviet economy during the nineteen-fifties grew twice as fast as the American economy. Surprise did not appear until the nineteen-seventies, when the Soviet growth rate slipped to only half of ours, and consternation was not evident until the middle to late nineteen-eighties, when C.I.A. and academic specialists alike began to report something very close to zero growth. But collapse! No one expected collapse.

There is still no definitive account as to exactly why the Soviet economic system collapsed—one can never find the nail for whose want the shoe was lost. There were undoubtedly elements of this economic disaster with their roots in history: the bureaucrat is well known to Russian literature. Perhaps



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the final blow was delivered by *glasnost,* which released long-pent-up anger against economic conditions; or perhaps by the Soviet attempt to meet the Star Wars initiative—one hears many such guesses. All we know for certain is that the system deteriorated to a point far beyond the worst economic crisis ever experienced by capitalism, and that the villain in this deterioration was the central planning system itself. The conclusion one inevitably comes to is that to whatever extent socialism depends on such a system it will not work.

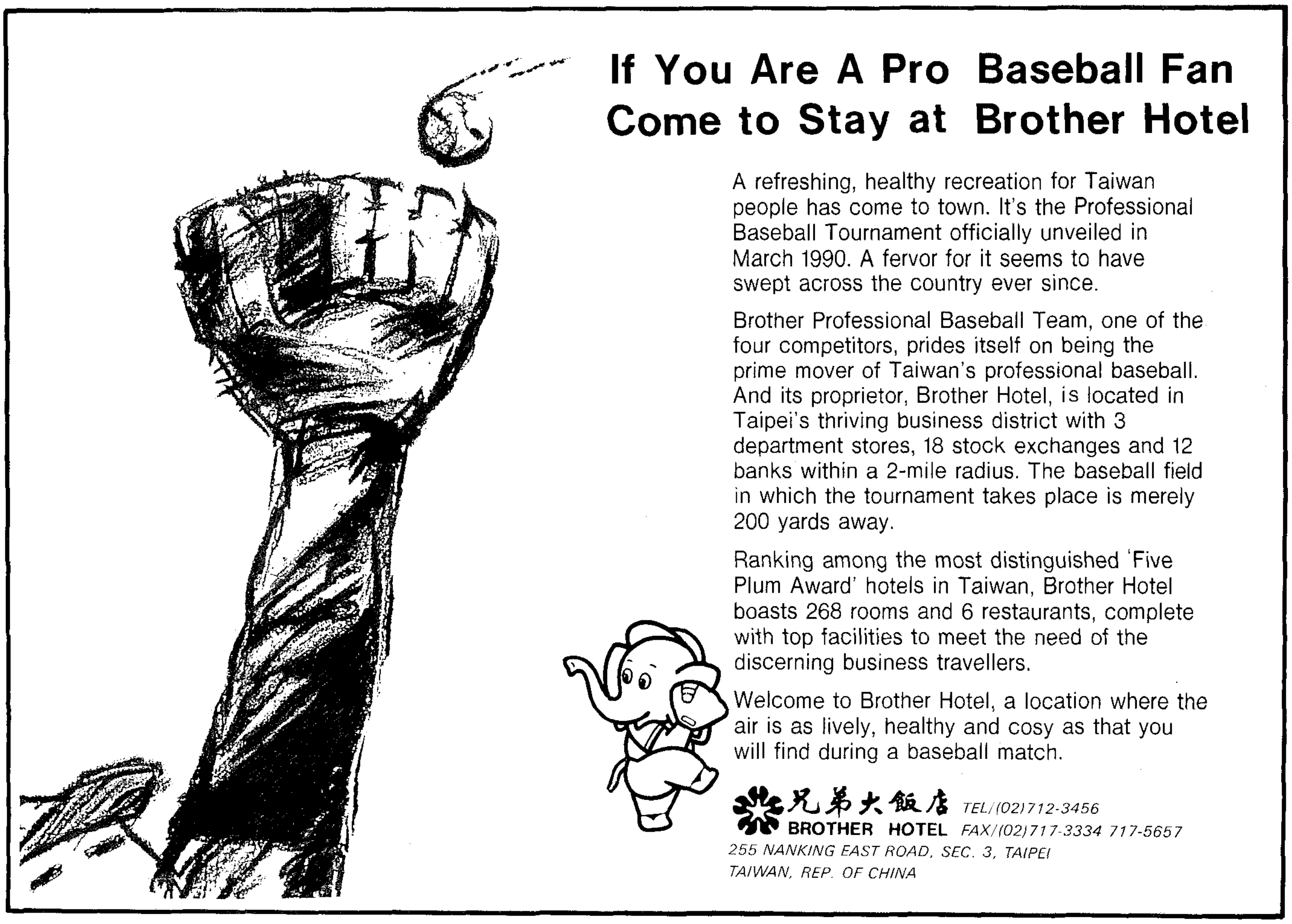
IN the nineteen-thirties, when I was studying economics, a few economists had already expressed doubts about the feasibility of centrally planned socialism. One of them was Ludwig von Mises, an Austrian of extremely conservative views, who had written of the "impossibility" of socialism, arguing that no Central Planning Board could ever gather the enormous amount of information needed to create a workable economic system. That did not seem a particularly cogent reason to reject socialism, given the irrationalities and incoherence of capitalism during the Great Depression. Our skepticism was fortified when Oskar Lange, a brilliant young Polish economist (who would become the first postwar Polish Ambassador to the United States), wrote two dazzling articles showing that a Board would not need all the information that Mises said it couldn't collect. All that such a Board would have to do, Lange wrote, was watch the levels of inventories in its warehouses: if inventories rose, the obvious thing to do was to lower prices, so that goods would move out more rapidly; and if inventories were too rapidly depleted, to raise prices in order to discourage sales. Fifty years ago, it was felt that Lange had decisively won the argument for socialist planning. Lange himself recognized that the problem of running a centralized system was not merely that of finding the right price levels to coördinate the economy. "*The real danger of socialism,*" he wrote, in italics, "*is that of a bureaucratization of economic life.*" But he took away the sting by adding, without italics, "Unfortunately, we do not see how the same, or even greater, danger can be averted under monopolistic capitalism."

It turns out, of course, that Mises was right. The Soviet system has long been dogged by a method of pricing that produced grotesque misallocations of effort. The difficulties were not so visible in the early days of Soviet industrialization or in the post-Second World War reconstruction period. The dams and mills and entire new cities of the nineteen-thirties astonished the world, as did the Chinese Great Leap Forward of the nineteen-fifties, which performed similar miracles from a still lower base. But those undertakings, like the building of the Pyramids or the Great Wall, depended less on economic coördination than on the political capacity for marshalling vast labor forces. Inefficiency set in when projects had to be joined into a complex whole—a process that required knowing how much things should cost. Then, as Mises foresaw, setting prices became a hopeless problem, because the economy never stood still long enough for anyone to decide anything correctly. Moreover, as Lange failed to see, it was one thing to declare that the Planning Board could adjust prices by watching inventory levels and another thing actually to do it. In "The Turning Point," a recently published scathing account of Russian economic problems, Nikolai Shmelev and Vladimir Popov, two very well-known Soviet economists, give an example of how prices have been set for goods that were not moving quickly enough out of warehouses. In 1982, the purchase price of moleskins was raised from twenty to fifty kopecks per pelt to stimulate the production of gloves from inexpensive furs. "State purchases increased, and now all the distribution centers are filled with these pelts," Shmelev and Popov report. "Industry is unable to use them all, and they often rot in warehouses before they can be processed. The Ministry of Light Industry has already requested Goskomtsen [the State Committee on Prices] twice to lower purchasing prices, but the 'question has not been decided' yet. And this is not surprising. Its members are too busy to decide. They have no time: besides setting prices on these pelts, they have to keep track of another 24 *million* prices. And how can they possibly know how much to lower the price today so they won't have to raise it tomorrow?"

Pricing, however, is only the tip of the iceberg. The great problem of central planning lies buried in the procedures by which the economy is given its marching orders. As in a military campaign, which central planning resembles in many ways, production is brought about by a series of commands from the top, not by the independent decisions of regimental commanders, company captains, and platoon sergeants. This means that the economy "works" because—and only to the extent that—the quantity, quality, size, weight, and selling price of every nut, bolt, hinge, beam, tractor, and hydroelectric turbine have been previously determined. At the supreme headquarters, the numbers for gross national product are announced. In considerably lower and dingier offices, the numbers for nuts, bolts, and turbines are calculated, but it is apparent that if the plans for the latter are off, the plans for the former may be impossible to attain.

Planning thus requires that the immense map of desired national output be carved up into millions of individual pieces, like a jigsaw puzzle—the pieces produced by hundreds of thousands of enterprises, and the whole thing finally reassembled in such a way as to fit. That would be an extraordinarily difficult task even if the map of desired output were unchanged from year to year, but, of course, it is not: the chief planners change their objectives, and new technologies or labor shortages or bad weather or simply mistakes get in the way. In 1986, before *perestroika* was officially formulated, Gosplan, the highest planning commission in the Soviet Union, issued two thousand sets of instructions for major "product groups," such as construction materials, metals, and automotive vehicles. Gossnab, the State Material and Technical Supply Commission, then divided these product groups into fifteen thousand categories—lumber, copper, and trucks, for instance—and the various ministries in charge of the categories in turn subdivided them into fifty thousand more finely detailed products (shingles, beams, laths, boards) and then into specific products in each category (large, medium, and small shingles). These plans then percolated down through the hierarchy of production, receiving emendations or protests as they reached the level of plant managers and engineers, and thereafter travelled back up to the ministerial level. In this Byzantine process, perhaps the most difficult single step was to establish "success indicators"—desired performance targets—for enterprises. For many years, targets were given in physical terms—so many yards of cloth or tons of nails—but that led to obvious difficulties. If cloth was rewarded by the yard, it was woven loosely to make the yarn yield more yards. If the output of nails was determined by their number, factories produced huge numbers of pinlike nails; if by weight, smaller numbers of very heavy nails. The satiric magazine *Krokodil* once ran a cartoon of a factory manager proudly displaying his record output, a single gigantic nail suspended from a crane.

The difficulty, of course, was that the inevitable mismatches and mistakes could not be set to rights by the decisions of platoon sergeants or regimental commanders who were able to see that the campaign was not going as expected. Shmelev and Popov tell of the Kurgan Bus Factory, to which the Gorky Automotive Factory shipped chassis assemblies. These assemblies had extra parts attached to them, suit-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able for the trucks that the Gorky factory produced but not for the buses that the Kurgan plant produced. The Kurgan workers then took sledgehammers and converted the truck chassis into bus chassis. "It is much harder to change GOST [State All-Union Standards] than to swing a sledgehammer," the authors comment. Individual factory managers not only were not free to produce what they wished but could not ship their output to whomsoever they chose, could not fire unwanted or inefficient workers, could not refuse to accept output shipped to them under the plan directive, and could not even spend their factory's money to buy unauthorized electric light bulbs. Hence the planning process always depended on the intervention of *tolkachi*—"fixers"—who found ways of getting supplies to enterprises that could not lay hands on them or of moving outputs away from enterprises that found themselves stuck with unwanted stuff.

From what we know now about how anarchic the planning process was, the wonder is not that the Soviet economy has given out but that it went on as long as it did. It seems to have done so by resort to inspired, or simply bizarre, improvisations that compensated for the underlying disorganization. In an atmosphere of continuous crisis, enterprises went to great lengths to avoid being caught in the chronic shortages that prevented targets from being met. Many big enterprises actually created their own little villages of repair shops, construction outfits, and other service establishments, which saddled the Soviet system with the largest (and probably the least efficient) corps of repairmen in the world. The remarkable achievements in space exploration and the high level of war matériel were obtained by giving them absolute priority and close supervision, unlike the lack of attention accorded to "unimportant" goods like buttons, toilet paper, needles, thread, and diapers, which therefore regularly disappeared from the market. Further appearances of success were gained by the Russian pattern of "storming" to meet plan targets by frenzied efforts crammed into the last week of the month or the last month of the quarter. Between storms, the economy registered its normal dispirited performance.

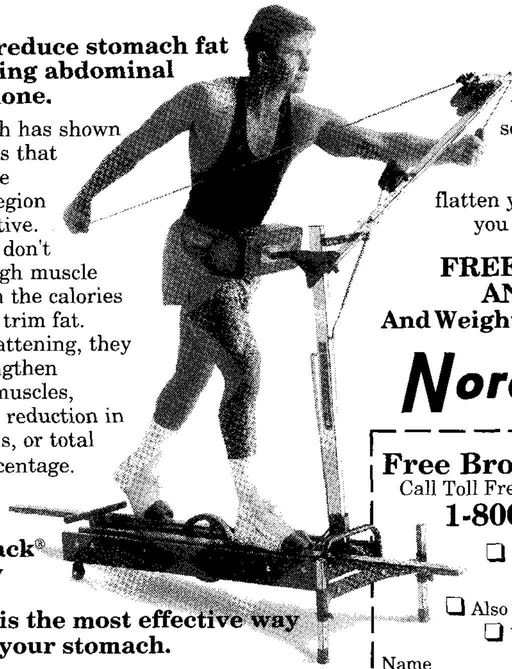
Thus, even though the over-all figures indicated strong growth all through the nineteen-sixties, the realities of material life began to show decline. In the early sixties, the Soviet Union became the first industrially developed country in history to suffer a prolonged fall in average life expectancy during peacetime, and the decline continued until the early eighties. That terrible trend may now have been arrested, but the underlying economic crisis has not come to an end. At a recent meeting near Washington, Soviet economists from the prestigious Academy of Sciences disputed the "pessimistic" conclusions of the C.I.A. that the Soviet G.N.P. was today only between one-half and one-third as high as that of the United States, and that Soviet citizens enjoyed the equivalent of Portuguese or Greek living standards. The Soviet experts maintained that a truer measure put the Soviet G.N.P. at one-seventh of the American—a figure that yields a per-capita standard of living in the Soviet Union which is approximately that of China.

THE meaning of *perestroika* is "restructuring," which is a way of saying that the present system is to be replaced with something that works. The aim of *perestroika* is the radical curtailment of central planning and its replacement by independent enterprises that can fix their own prices, determine their own outputs, and, indeed, design their own products. The general outline was first announced in June of 1987, and was spelled out in a Law on State Enterprises, which stipulated that some seventy per cent of all state enterprises be cut entirely free from planned directives by 1990. Managers would still have to deliver a certain portion of their output to state enterprises, but in the main they would be expected to sink or swim without state intervention. Unneeded or inefficient personnel could be let go. Peasants were to be encouraged to rent land for their own use. A whole array of small private enterprises of various kinds—restaurants, hair salons, service establishments, garages, and the like—was given official sanction, even encouragement. Coöperatives were looked on benignly. Taken together, the reforms envisaged the establishment of a completely unplanned sector of the economy, in which enterprises would behave exactly as if they were firms competing in a capitalist economy.

To some extent, this has begun; by

1988, Gosplan was handling only four hundred and fifteen industry plans instead of two thousand. But the restructuring thus far is small and incomplete. Last year, a visiting Soviet economist told me with some pride that in three years the government hoped to reduce the number of planned prices from more than two million (the number varies a great deal from source to source) to fewer than a thousand. This reduction becomes less impressive when one reflects that it may be achieved by dropping control over the prices on Soviet menus or in Soviet hardware stores while retaining it over the prices of steel, cement, basic chemicals, and the like. In much the same halfway fashion, the new structure permits a great many individual enterprises to determine which kinds of goods they may produce, but only within limits: a nail factory can now decide for itself what sizes and weights of nails it will make, but it cannot switch from nails to, say, wire.

The reasons for the slow pace of change are many. Agricultural workers have been reluctant to become farmers: "Who will pay us if the crop fails?" they ask. Factory managers who have chafed in the straitjacket of a planned system find their enthusiasm for change cooling as they begin to contemplate the consequences of failing to make the grade under competition. Even the boldest of them must reckon with the fact that there are no real banks, much less bankers, to turn to for credit; no accountants trained to keep true profit-and-loss books; no lawyers to handle commercial disputes. Meanwhile, from the Kremlin's perspective the immediate consequences of a bold move into *perestroika* are bound to be politically upsetting. A rapid switchover would leave tens of thousands, and perhaps hundreds of thousands, of middle-level bureaucrats stranded. Millions, and perhaps tens of millions, of unproductive workers would likely be let go. Retail prices, which have been subsidized for years to keep prices down, would, it is estimated, double or triple if prices were allowed to find their true market levels. A huge government deficit and a large overhang of rubles in Soviet citizens' bank accounts also threaten to send a free-price system into runaway inflation. It is not surprising that in the face of such prospects, and in the midst of other immense problems, the rhetoric of



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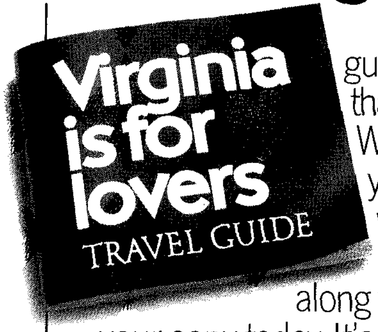

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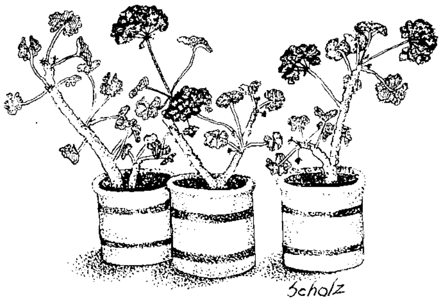
perestroika has been accompanied by very little visible change. A few strands of the spiderweb have been cut, but the economy is still firmly caught up in central planning. Price controls will continue for at least two years, and, one suspects, longer. Capitalist-like behavior is the exception rather than the rule. When I was in Leningrad a year ago, I was struck by the absence of street cafés, surely an easy entry point for private enterprise. But then I reflected on the problems: getting permits from the local officials; finding tables, glassware, cutlery, in the absence of any Yellow Pages; locating suppliers for coffee, or tea, or beer. So there are no cafés.

In the background hovers a more difficult question. The advent of a market-driven society implies a shift in political power. If *perestroika* succeeds, it will bring into being a new stratum of society, equivalent to the "management" class in Western capitalism. Such a stratum will have the formidable power to move the economy forward or to hold it back—not because its members conspire to do so but because, as in the West, economic conditions do or do not favor expansion. In that way, a successful *perestroika* implies the establishment of two realms of power in place of one—a realm of economic power, entrusted with the affairs of production, employment, and economic activity generally, and a realm of political power, charged with the exercise of the traditional affairs of government. Thus far in history, only capitalism has given rise to these two mutually dependent but never unified realms—or perhaps one should say that only the advent of two separate realms, in the aftermath of the fall of the Roman Empire, has created the conditions in which capitalism could arise. To the extent that *perestroika* creates such a dual structure, it will to a very large degree have re-created one of the fundamental conditions for capitalism. That, one suspects, is what holds back the authorities from allowing the *perestroika* program to move ahead full blast. The publicly cited obstacles are real enough—the threat of sudden massive unemployment, of inflation, of panicky public reactions. Yet I cannot help thinking that behind them is a fear that a plunge into full-scale restructuring would be tantamount to the installation of a socioeconomic system that has been the declared arch-enemy of everything the Revolution has stood for.

FOR all these reasons, it is impossible to be hopeful about a rapid improvement in the Soviet economy or in the particular form of socialist economics in which it is mired. Things are very different in the liberated East European nations. Some Soviet economists may yearn for something like capitalism as the remedy for their ills, but they cannot dare to say so yet, whereas among the liberated nations there is an outspoken and impatient desire to move toward a destination popularly called Not Socialism. What Not Socialism means is not altogether clear, except that it emphatically will not have an economy run by central planning. Ideally, it will possess the vitality of capitalism without a class of powerful capitalists, a substantial amount of government guidance without a corps of bureaucrats. It may have a stock market but not a casino. Only one thing is certain in these half-formulated plans and hopes: the market mechanism will become the main coördinating mechanism of the economy. Whatever Not Socialism will be called, the market will be its tutelary deity.

There is no doubt that the market is an astonishing solution to the problem of creating a workable economic system, and it is not surprising that it appeals greatly to nations that have just escaped from a system that is a prime anti-example of how to create one. That accounts, perhaps, for an embrace of "the market" which reminds me, in its simplistic fervor, of the embrace of planning in the days of capitalist malfunction fifty years ago, although in the present case it is not ignorance but amnesia that has blocked out the problems of unemployment, maldistribution, and other market disorders that were a prime cause of socialism in the first place. What is of greater importance in this celebration of the market's capacities is the recognition that markets are systems of coördination but are not social orders in themselves. A market vitalizes and integrates a society's economic energies, but the energies emerge from a prior and lower foundation—in the case of capitalism, its imperious and never satisfied drive to expand capital. It is this drive, featured in every financial report and anxiously followed in every day's financial news, that sets the market in motion, and it is the effects of this drive, transmitted through the market, that impart to capitalism its powerful historical vitality.



As the disorganized economies of Eastern Europe move toward the market, they will need a driving force to set their markets in motion. The question is whether there is such a force, other than the drive for power—sublimated as the quest for wealth—that animates capitalism. "It is better that a man should tyrannize over his bank balance than over his fellow-citizens," Keynes wrote. But socialists have always worried about a possibility that Keynes mentioned only in passing; namely, that the first could be a means to the second. Their hope has been that a kind of civic awareness could provide the necessary incentives, giving us a society driven by higher rather than lower promptings. One does not have to be a cynic to be skeptical of the likelihood of such a basis for social motivation. Oskar Lange's Central Planning Board officials, who obediently raised and lowered prices according to inventory levels, were presumably acting like good civil servants. Lange failed to ask whether such civil servants would in fact obey the "signals" of the marketplace as quickly or decisively as a businessman would. At best, a civil servant would be awarded a raise in grade for faithfully doing what he was supposed to do, and would be demoted if he did not do it. More likely, as in the moleskin case, inertia would win out over duty, and the signals would be ignored, or answered cautiously: decisive action is not a common bureaucratic trait. By way of contrast, a businessman would hope to win a fortune by following the arrow of economic advantage and would fear to lose his shirt if he did not follow it. From this viewpoint, private ownership plays an active economic function, and is not merely an excuse for getting rich. The same Ludwig von Mises who doubted whether a Central

Planning Board could bring into being a coherent economy wrote that socialists want people "to play market as children play war, railroad, or school." His words raise the question of whether a market system can in fact operate vigorously unless it is played for keeps, which is to say for rewards and punishments that far outweigh medals for good behavior.

Hence, articles in the East European economics journals have discussed many plans for instituting personal ownership, whether by selling shares in former state enterprises to managers, to workers, to trade unions, to employees, or just to anyone who has the money. Such sales would have the useful side effect of mopping up much of the bank balances that otherwise threaten to start an inflationary spiral. On the other hand, there is the disconcerting possibility that restoration of private ownership of the means of production would rapidly put the enterprises into the hands of the possessors of the great bulk of the world's capital; namely, Europe, America, and Japan. Such a transfer would follow the pattern of previous international movements of capital, in which Europe, America, and Japan have supplied hard currency and expertise to would-be capitalisms, which in exchange have made available their only asset—cheap labor. Thus, one prospect that threatens to come with the spread of the market into Eastern Europe is the Mexicanization of its economies. Pessimists say Bolivianization; optimists, Koreanization. Given the range of human and natural resources in the belt of nations stretching from troubled Poland, through favored East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, into backward Romania and Bulgaria, we are likely to have a spectrum of such outcomes, none of which will be quite what the architects of Not Socialism hoped for.

IN all likelihood, then, the direction in which things are headed is some version of capitalism, whatever its title may be. That opens the immense question of the inner dynamics of that powerful system, whose evolutionary character has been persistently overlooked by its supporters, and whose capacity for adaptive survival by its detractors. In the light of the direction in which Not Socialism is heading, I have only a word to say. The evolutionary character of capitalism derives, in the main, from the activity within its private realm, where individuals and corporations do all the things they are unable to do in a centrally planned system: innovate, expand, contract, and otherwise seek to enlarge, rescue, or change their markets. This activity is what gives capitalism its simultaneous inner growth and inner decline; and it is apparent enough, weighing both sides in the balance of history, that successes have outmatched failures, and growth has outpaced decline.

But no capitalism has ever made its way by relying on the energies of its private realm alone. Two tutelary deities watch over its fate, although obeisance is made only to one. The market-driven sector, to which we genuflect, is the main source of energy, but the public realm, which we ignore or decry, is the guardian of the whole. Here is where capitalism tries to cope with its own dynamism—by no means always successfully, but in the only way it has available. Thus, the public sector

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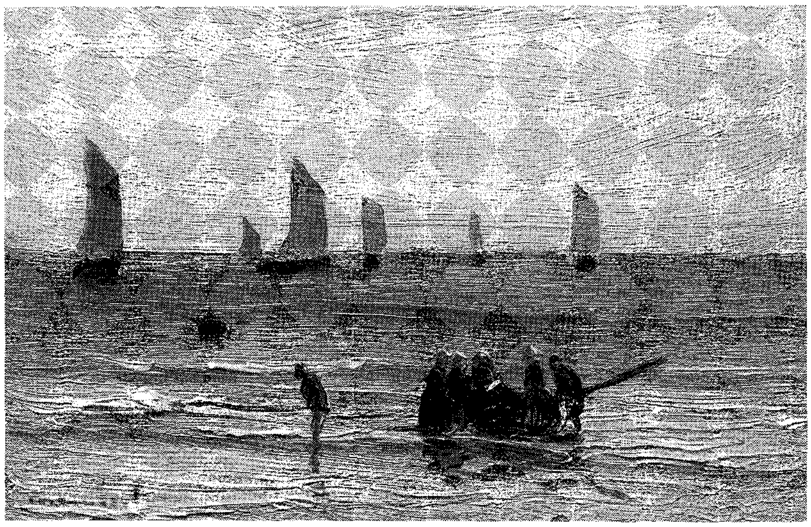

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pays out incomes, levies taxes, regulates industries, and interferes in a thousand other ways for a single public purpose. That purpose is to prevent the dynamism of the private realm from working its way unimpeded on the lives or fortunes of individuals. Were this not the objective, there would be no need for a public realm, aside from the obvious necessity of providing a foundation of law and order, without which society itself could not exist.

Capitalism is thus as intimately entangled with planning as it is with the market. Its entanglement is called not planning but economic policy, and I need hardly add that economic policy is very different from central planning. It is planning nonetheless—that is, a deliberate effort to bring about some outcome different from that which would otherwise emerge from the market process. The outcome of an undisturbed market has no rationale or justification other than the fulfillment of individual wants, which is its most cherished and valuable achievement. The need for planning arises because in the process of fulfilling those wants private activities often result in other outcomes—some as local as the deterioration of a neighborhood, some as large-scale as national boom and bust. If the larger society is to exercise any supervision over these unintended outcomes, it must be by the intrusion of the public realm into the operations of the private. Planning is therefore the manner in which a capitalist society attempts to control its economic destiny. This helps us understand the increase in the extent and penetration of the public sector visible throughout capitalism's history. As the destiny-shaping capacity of the private realm has increased—as the size of enterprises, the complexity of technology, the reach of competition have grown—so has the need for the counteractivities of the public realm.

All this has implications for the efforts of the East European countries to create for themselves Not Socialism. To the extent that their economies model themselves on capitalism, they must expect continued tension between the private and the public realms. Market socialism is often mentioned as the name of the social order that may arise in at least some of these countries. But if market socialism is also to have two realms of power, one public and one private, and if it is to coördinate the blind drive of the market with the desires of the larger society, it may be very difficult to claim that it is also Not Capitalism.

FOR all these reasons, I am not very sanguine about the prospect that socialism will continue as an important form of economic organization now that Communism is finished. This statement will come as a wry commentary to those who remember that Marx defined socialism as the stage that precedes Communism. But the collapse of the planned economies has forced us to rethink the meaning of socialism. As a semireligious vision of a transformed humanity, it has been dealt devastating blows in the twentieth century. As a blueprint for a rationally planned society, it is in tatters. What, then, is left?

I have come to see this as a question to which one can give two answers. One of them depicts socialism as a general description of a society in which we would like our grandchildren to live. For me, such a society would embody the level of social welfare for which Sweden is famous, the mixture of public and private realms found in Austria, the respect for civil liberties characteristic of the Netherlands, the public culture enjoyed by France, the distribution of income that exists in Norway, the security of employment that prevails in Japan, and the gaiety of life that is palpable in Italy. If I had not named the countries but described only the social or political or economic institutions themselves, such a society might appear to many to deserve the honorable title of socialism. What is disconcerting, of course, is that it is a socialism constructed out of institutions taken from capitalist countries.

To be sure, such a socialistic capitalism may never be achieved, or the effort to reach it may require the dedication and idealism of parties or movements that call themselves socialist. It is also no doubt the case that there are limits to its attainments, under the best of circumstances. For example, I do not think that a thoroughgoing decommercialization of life or a far-reaching democratization of the workplace or an equitable reorganization of the world economic system is likely to be a realizable goal under the aegis of even the most advanced capitalism, if only because I doubt whether such radical policies would win popular support, at least in the West. In a word, socialism as a desirable social order that lies beyond the reach of advanced capitalism appears to me an unlikely prospect within the imaginable future. It seems unlikely in part because one residual effect of the collapse of Communism is apt to be an inhibition of the social imagination. In larger part, however, my skepticism stems from an absence of plausible social blueprints whose realization seems worth the risk of venturing beyond the known terrain of capitalism. Of course, in the event of a collapse of capitalism equal in magnitude to that of Communism, such inhibitions may well fall away and a radical socialist destination again come into view. I myself do not think that such a collapse is likely, although it is certainly not impossible. More important, I am by no means sure that a socialism conceived and constructed under such circumstances would be the Camelot of its designers.

There is, however, another way of looking at, or for, socialism. It is to conceive of it not in terms of the specific improvements we would like it to embody but as the society that must emerge if humanity is to cope with the one transcendent challenge that faces it within a thinkable timespan. This is the ecological burden that economic growth is placing on the environment. The challenge has drawn its first blood in the epidemic rise in skin cancer that is a consequence of the depletion of the ozone layer. It threatens to open far deeper and more serious wounds as the atmosphere gradually forms its invisible panes of carbon dioxide and other gases, as waters build up unmanageable levels of dangerous chemicals, as soils become leached, and as the very bedrock becomes contaminated with the uncontainable toxic waste of spent nuclear fuel. The ecological crisis toward which we are moving at a quickening pace has occasioned much scientific comment but surprisingly little economic attention. Yet if there is any single problem that will have to be faced by any socioeconomic order over the coming decades it is the problem of making our economic peace with the demands of the environment. Making that peace means insuring that the vital processes of material provisioning do not contaminate the green-blue film on which life itself depends. This imperative need will affect all social formations, but none so profoundly as

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capitalism. Whatever its other consequences, the closing window of environmental tolerance will impose an utterly new condition of caution and constraint on a civilization whose historical thrust has been in just the opposite direction. It is, perhaps, possible that some of the institutions of capitalism—markets, dual realms of power, even private ownership of some kinds of production—may be adapted to that new state of ecological vigilance, but, if so, they must be monitored, regulated, and contained to such a degree that it would be difficult to call the final social order capitalism.

I do not know whether it will be called socialism, either, or what coördination mechanisms, property rights, political liberties, or general culture might provide the framework of such an ecologically imperilled society. In all likelihood, these arrangements would be a great deal more cramping than those of today. Added to this is the much larger and more intractable issue of persuading poor nations that are seeking to raise their standards of living to cut back on their industrial emissions because they are warming up the air of rich nations on the other side of the globe. Such awesomely large and frightening problems make unavoidable a realization that socialism as a social order designed to ward off ecological disaster will of necessity be a less agreeable undertaking than socialism as a design for the benefit of our grandchildren in the absence of such an overriding challenge.

By the same token, however, our great-grandchildren or great-great-grandchildren may be prepared to acquiesce in social arrangements that our children or grandchildren would not. Agreeable or not, this is the direction in which humanity will have to travel, under whatever social dispensation, assuming that the predictions of a trend toward massive long-run environmental deterioration turn out to be correct. If that is the case, as most scientists now believe, the paramount concern of all nations and all economic systems will become, with increasing urgency, a mode of life that assures survival—perhaps eventually a rich level of survival, but survival nonetheless. From this perspective, the long vista after Communism leads through capitalism into a still unexplored world that must be safely attained and settled before it can be named. —ROBERT HEILBRONER

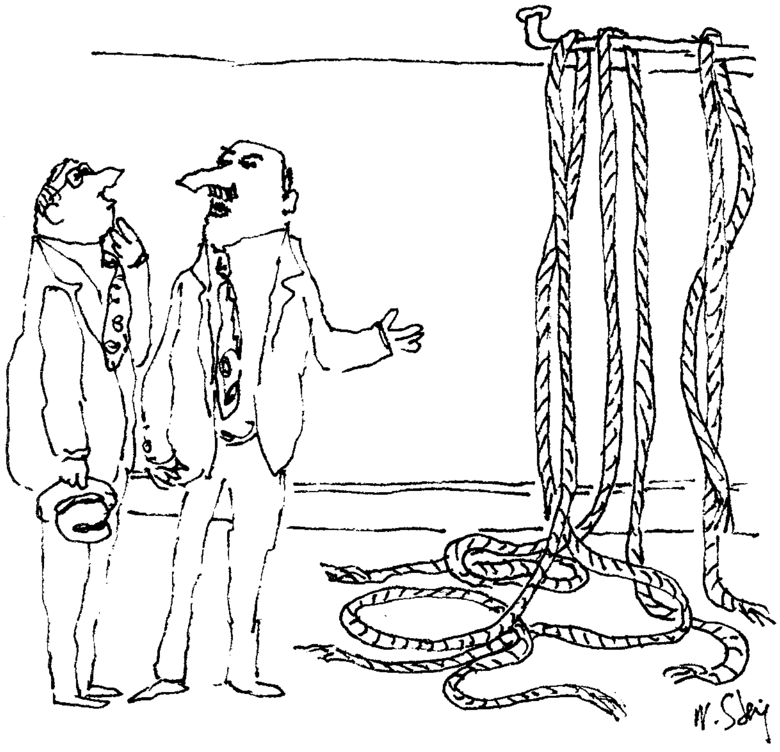
THE CURRENT CINEMA

High and Low

THE strangest thing about "Akira Kurosawa's Dreams" is that not one of its eight segments feels like a real dream. What Kurosawa calls dreams are more like poetic *tableaux vivants:* meticulous formal elaborations of imagery that could have originated in the mind of someone dreaming. And although Kurosawa's style is unmistakable, we never get the sense that he's truly revealing himself here; the movie has an eerily impersonal quality. Ostensibly, the filmmaker is serving up the very stuff of his unconscious. Actually, he's doing something quite different: attempting to refine and abstract unconscious material to the point of absolute purity—the purity of ritual. The kind of power that Kurosawa aims for, and intermittently achieves, in "Dreams" is less oneiric than ceremonial. The film is a succession of sweeping dramatic gestures and lofty incantations performed in an atmosphere of hushed solemnity.

The high-priestly tone of Kurosawa's direction is an extension of the stately, imperious manner of his later films (like the 1980 "Kagemusha" and the 1985 "Ran"). This sort of style can be irritating: every effect is huge; every composition seems to strain for transcendence; every statement sounds like the word of God. As Kurosawa approaches the end of an extraordinary filmmaking career—he is eighty years old—his work has taken on the burden of metaphysics, but he is no philosopher, and never has been. What he has always been is a great maker of images, and his attempt to tap into the mysteries of the universe is primarily an exploration of the power of visual form: the arrangement of colors and shapes in the vast space of the movie screen. In temperament, Kurosawa's recent work resembles nothing so much as the late paintings of Mark Rothko, with their gigantic, looming shapes set against—and dissolving into—even larger fields of uniform color: canvases that mean to induce in us a kind of spiritual shiver, to chill us with intimations of infinity. To try to make art of this kind is, of course, an act of hubris, and if you fail you look like a windbag, an arrogant fool. Kurosawa has never been afraid to embarrass himself by overreaching. When he adapts a work of literature, he invariably chooses something of the most daunting complexity, like "The Idiot" or "King Lear" (the main source of "Ran"); his action films, like "The Seven Samurai" and "Yojimbo," are conceived on the scale of epics. And even when he has worked on stories of apparently less ambitious scope, with a smaller cast of characters or a more confined setting (as in "Rashomon," "Ikiru," "The Lower Depths," "High and Low," "Red Beard," "Dodes'ka-den"), he has always tried to extract from the material some statement of universal significance—to turn these modest dramas into moral epics. In his films Kurosawa is immodest to the core, as Griffith was, as Abel Gance was; and, like them, he's unsubtle—prone to grandiosity, sentimentality, didacticism, all kinds of pompous folly. And there isn't a filmmaker alive whose art so persistently strives for exaltation or so frequently produces it.

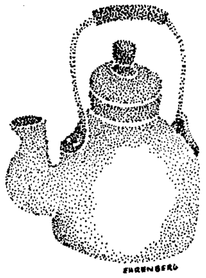
So let's cut Kurosawa some slack, and pass quickly over the four tedious, overblown segments that make up the second hour of "Dreams." The fifth episode, "Crows," a fantasy encounter with van Gogh, is perhaps the dopiest sequence Kurosawa has ever put on film: paintings become real, natural backgrounds turn into paintings, and van Gogh (played by Martin Scorsese) mumbles a few truisms about the nature of art. It's a thin conceit, and neither the grandeur of van Gogh's paintings nor the cleverness of Kurosawa's recreations of them can disguise its preciousness. The next two segments, "Mount Fuji in Red" and "The Weeping Demon," are cautionary fables about nuclear devastation. In the first, a nuclear-power-plant explosion has caused Mount Fuji to erupt; the few survivors gather by the sea, and make speeches about who's responsible for the disaster until bright-colored radioactive clouds overcome them all. In the second, a solitary traveller (Akira Terao, who plays the dreamer in all but the first two segments of the film) wanders through a blasted post-apocalyptic landscape and comes upon a grotesque, tattered old man, who gives him a guided tour of a nightmarishly mutated world, full of ominous giant dandelions and wailing humanoid demons. The final segment, "Village of the Watermills," is a pastoral idyll in which a very old man (Chishu Ryu) extolls the virtues of living in harmony with nature. This segment is meant, of course, as a corrective to the science-fiction horrors of the two previous ones; it's Kurosawa's prescription for all that ails us. The trouble with this sequence, as with the two before it, is that we



"*Let me show you the ropes.*"

get the idea of each very quickly, and the idea is neither startling enough to resonate nor complex enough to develop. Even though they last only fifteen minutes or so apiece, these episodes seem static and overlong. And they feel *willed*, self-conscious; homilies are not the stuff of dreams.

In the four earlier segments, Kurosawa keeps his aesthetic and moral impulses in better balance: when he's at his best, the impulses are indistinguishable. The opening segment, "Sunshine Through the Rain," is the vision of a small child, and it seems to have sprung from a strong image—if not a dream, then a memory—rather than from a didactic urge. A five-year-old boy stands at the gate of his house watching rain fall on a sunny day; his mother tells him that in this sort of weather foxes hold their wedding processions, and the boy goes into the forest and spies on the animals' ceremony. The foxes' wedding—performed by dancers in masks—is a thing of solemn beauty, made even more magical by the sight and sound of shimmering rainfall: the light has an unearthly quality, and gives the images a sort of translucent clarity. When the boy returns home after witnessing this dazzling spectacle, his mother scolds him and refuses to let him back in the house; by watching the procession, she says, he has angered the foxes, and unless they forgive him he'll have to kill himself. She shuts the gate, and he wanders off again; in the segment's final image, he sees a rainbow, which is the sign of the foxes' forgiveness. This resolution is also a sign that "Sunshine Through the Rain" is something other than a literal transcription of a dream: a real dream would end with the shutting of the gate, not with the redemptive rainbow. But there is greatness in this sequence—a wholly original sense of the rapturous fear and awe we feel when we first come upon the wonders of the natural world.



The ecstatic pantheism of the opening episode is slightly blunted by the second, "The Peach Orchard," which is also a childhood dream about nature; it's lovely, but its mood and pace are too similar to those of the first, and its respect-for-living-things message is more explicit, and therefore weaker. The third episode, "The Blizzard," is a radical departure from the green childhood world of the first and second. There's virtually no color in this sequence. Four men are trapped in a ferocious snowstorm on the side of a mountain, and all they can see is white; they're the only things alive in the middle of a fierce blankness, and if they give up they'll become part of it. Characteristically, Kurosawa turns what seems to be an exercise in minimalism into something excessive, hyperbolic: he lays on the (fake) snow, the howling-wind effects, and the bleak, undifferentiated vistas of despair until we feel like screaming from the sheer hopeless monotony of it all. And then he pulls a miracle out of the white void: a woman (Mieko Harada, who played the ravishing, murderous Lady Kaede in "Ran") appears to the party's leader as he battles sleep. She has long black hair and wears diaphanous robes, and Kurosawa performs wonders with that hair and those robes: they whip and swirl around her so that her image remains fluid, changing, ungraspable. We can't take our eyes off her, and we're never quite sure what she's meant to represent. She is beautiful—impossibly, indefinably beautiful—and this is perhaps the most piercing image ever made of the desires that keep people from surrendering to death: *this* is a spirit to leap out of your deathbed in pursuit of. And it's the sort of transcendent image that undoubtedly keeps Kurosawa going, too.

The inspiration that radiates from the final few minutes of "The Blizzard" carries over to the next episode, which is called "The Tunnel." Here the dominant color is black. The dreamer, in a military officer's uniform, walks along a deserted road toward a tunnel. He approaches it slowly, as if he dreaded having to pass through it; a dog emerges from the darkness, barks and growls at him, and then backs off, and he continues, his footsteps echoing rhythmically as he walks through the tunnel and finally comes out into the light on the other side. Then he hears footsteps behind him and turns to face the blackness again, and as the steps grow louder a figure emerges: a man with an ash-white face, in the uniform of a private. He stops and stands at attention: the dreamer was his commanding officer. Respectfully, this ap-

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parition—who is as alarming and as poignant as the gaunt soldier who dies in front of young Henry in "The Red Badge of Courage"—tells his superior, "I can't believe I'm really dead." He points to a single light on a distant hillside: "That's my home." He presents arms, wheels, and returns to the tunnel, and then the rest of the platoon—all white-faced, all dead—march out to face the commander. The dreamer acknowledges responsibility for sending them to their deaths, expresses guilt at having survived them, then dismisses them back to the tunnel; as he turns away from the darkness for the last time, the dog appears again, snarling at his feet, and the sequence ends. The idea of this segment may be banal, but "The Tunnel" is a brilliant, hypnotic piece of filmmaking. Its images are simple, stark, and resonant, its dramatic shape is lucid and classically satisfying, and its rhythm is overwhelming, unstoppable: it moves with a sorrowful marching pace, the rhythm of grief.

If "Dreams" had ended there, with that menacing dog, it might have seemed a masterpiece; it would have seemed more dreamlike, too. But the world isn't perfect, and neither is Kurosawa. Forget about the feeble sermonizing of the second half. Kurosawa has more than earned our forgiveness for his lapses. At its best, his work has a grace and a strength that few other film artists have achieved; in long passages, and sometimes in whole movies, he has come within shouting distance of the sublime. And even when he's just huffing and puffing and lumbering around, he huffs and puffs and lumbers like a giant.

SAM RAIMI's "Darkman" is unusually ambitious pulp; it demonstrates that there's such a thing as overreaching at the low-art end of the movie spectrum, too. It's a comic-book movie made with real conviction. Raimi works from inside the cheerfully violent adolescent-male sensibility of superhero comics, as if there were no higher style for a filmmaker to aspire to, and the absence of condescension is refreshing. The film's graphic style is all bright colors, high contrast, and skewed angles; its narrative is breathlessly speedy; its emotions are basic (mostly greed and revenge); and its dialogue is so crude and punchy that you can practically see the exclamation points. Raimi has even invented, in his title character, a worthy addition to the tradition of angelic-demonic avengers. Darkman is a scientist, named Peyton Westlake (Liam Neeson), who is experimenting with the creation of artificial skin. When a group of thugs, employed by an evil real-estate developer (Colin Friels), blows up his laboratory, Peyton is presumed dead, but (naturally) he has survived, albeit with his face horribly disfigured by burns. He sets up a laboratory in an abandoned factory and fabricates a synthetic-skin mask of his face; the catch is that the skin disintegrates after a hundred minutes (about the length of a movie, come to think of it). As he goes about his mission of wiping out the bad guys and saving his girlfriend (Frances McDormand) from their clutches, he appears in different guises: sometimes as Peyton; sometimes, for strategic purposes, in a mask of one of the villains' faces; and sometimes as a darting, shadowy figure whose head is swathed in bandages, like the Invisible Man's.

"Darkman" has an authentically cheesy look, and it is bracingly unpretentious. Raimi gets the superhero-comics spirit exactly right. (Just as, in "Evil Dead II," he did justice—if that's the word—to the gruesome humor of horror comics.) Yet the movie, for all its snap and vigor, isn't quite satisfying. Raimi has some terrific visual ideas, but his skills as a director are rather primitive. Frequently, you find yourself wishing that he had the technique to match his imagination; you can see that an image or an entire sequence has been cleverly designed, yet it doesn't fully come to life—you respond to the idea of it rather than to the experience of it on the screen. It may seem perverse to criticize a comic-book movie for being too crude technically; the pulpiness of "Darkman" is, in a sense, the best thing about it. But maybe the very qualities that make this picture comiclike are the ones that limit its power as a movie. Comic books, after all, can't do as much as movies can—as art, as storytelling, as imaginative stimulation. The images and ideas in "Darkman" don't flow, don't carry us along with them, in the way a real filmmaker's would. Raimi has made a first-rate comic book without having made a genuinely exciting movie.

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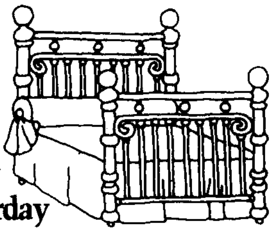

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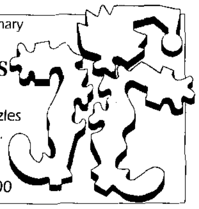

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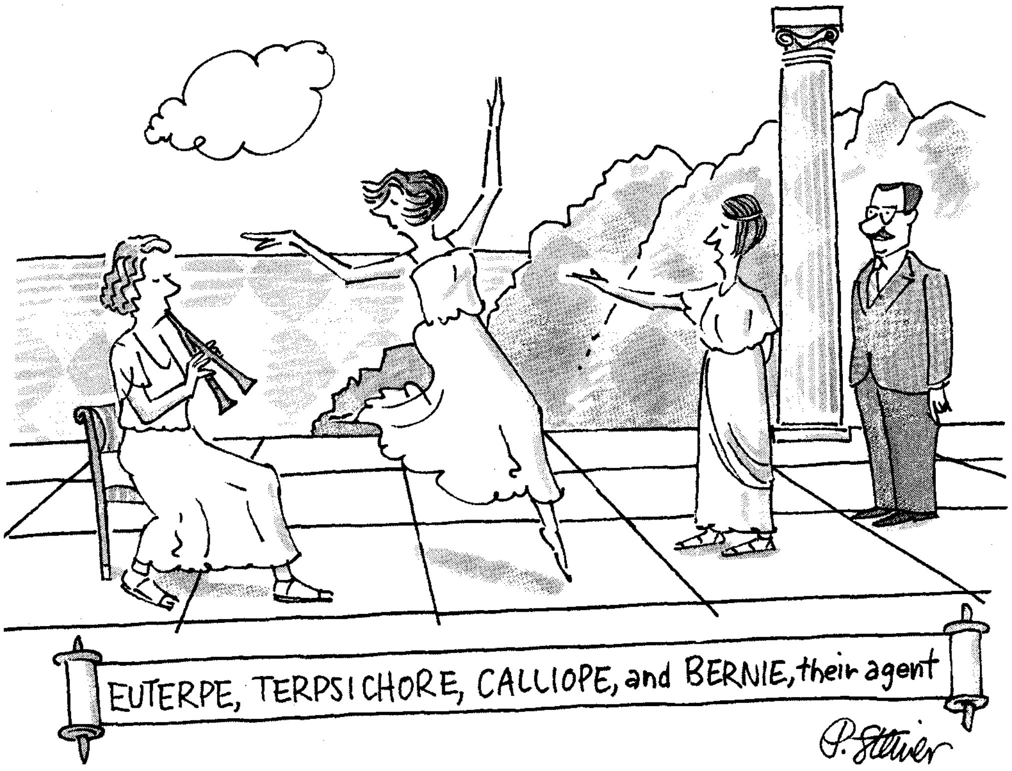
AROUND CITY HALL

Peacekeepers

MANY people of a certain age who haven't adjusted to the reality that the phrase "turn of the century" now refers to the end of the present decade tend to associate the late summer of 1914, the eve of what hardly anybody now calls the Great War, with dimly recollected illustrations from old history books—in some cases, pictures of figures in white flannels or flowing dresses playing fierce games of tennis, or perhaps croquet, in the midst of wide green lawns even as the guns of that August marked the start of the vast military enterprise that the history books later declared had changed the world forever. Such history buffs have doubtless found it easier than some other Americans to understand President Bush's manic expression at Kennebunkport as—calling out "Gotta go! Gotta go!"—he sped off in his golf cart, inviting such cartoonists' jabs as "GULF OR GOLF CRISIS" by Herblock; and to understand also Bush's refusal to give up more than a few days of his scheduled twenty-five-day vacation in the place where he has spent part of every summer of his life except 1944, when he was in combat with the United States Navy. The war that kept him away from Kennebunkport that year began in the last days of another summer, as W. H. Auden noted in his poem "September 1, 1939," written at the time. The choice made by Auden, then a New Yorker, of a late-summer spot in which to "prudently recreate," as the President has described his holiday activities, was not a playing field. The poem begins, "I sit in one of the dives/ On Fifty-second Street/ Uncertain and afraid/ As the clever hopes expire/ Of a low dishonest decade. . . . The unmentionable odour of death/ Offends the September night."

It seems likely that to the President, whose address during the two years that he was a New York resident, as Ambassador to the United Nations, was the Waldorf-Astoria, much of the headlined news out of the city this summer seemed as bizarre and alien as anything his foreign-intelligence experts might have told him about what was going on among ordinary citizens in Iraq or Kuwait. Auden lived here far longer (thirty-three years), much of the time in the East Village. Before he departed the city, in 1972, for his native England and then Austria, he wrote in the *Times*, "Though I've lived more than half my life in the States, am an American citizen . . . I cannot, of course, call myself an American. I do, however, think of myself as a New Yorker." He once reported that he never left his St. Mark's Place apartment without a five-dollar bill in his pocket as defense against physical attack by someone who might accost him for money. It is not at all clear that five dollars would protect him in today's angry and violent city. During the last month, several events took place here—within just a few days—which either demonstrated once again that to many New Yorkers violence is the preferred answer to any human dilemma or which commemorated events whose place-names are reminders of the brutal destiny that may await a New Yorker around the next corner. On August 18th, after ten days of deliberation, a Manhattan jury handed down a verdict in the case of the young white woman jogger attacked in April, 1989, in Central Park. Three young men—two blacks and one Latino—were convicted of rape and assault with depraved indifference to human life. August 23rd was the first anniversary of the murder of Yusuf Hawkins, the sixteen-year-old black high-school student who was attacked and shot dead by a band of youths in the heavily white Brooklyn neighborhood of Bensonhurst. In the view of many New Yorkers, the shooting changed local political history, by proving to voters the bitter intensity of racial divisions here, although former Mayor Edward Koch had assured them that in his regime such divisions had eased and were, in any case, much less perilous than those in most other cities. Three weeks after the Hawkins killing, Koch, running for a fourth term as mayor, was defeated in the Democratic primary by his black opponent, David Dinkins. The day before the anniversary of Hawkins' death, one of his attackers, John Vento, was sentenced to a jail term of two years and eight months to eight years. Two others are already serving time. Joseph Fama received a sentence of thirty-two and two-thirds years to life on counts that included homicide, while Keith Mondello, convicted of lesser charges, got five and a third to sixteen years. On August 23rd, a small procession of young Hawkins' friends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and family, including his parents and the Reverend Al Sharpton, marked the anniversary with a prayer service and the unveiling of a headstone carved with a clenched fist clutching a cross and the inscription "It Is Through the Struggle in Life That Cause Change." The only government official to attend was the Brooklyn District Attorney, Charles (Joe) Hynes, who had been invited by the family. Hynes was the successful prosecutor in the Bensonhurst case, and, as a state special prosecutor, also won convictions of most of the white defendants in the Howard Beach case, in which a black man was chased to his death by white teen-agers. "I thought after the Howard Beach verdict things would change, but they haven't," Hynes said at Hawkins' graveside. "People still hate."

ALSO competing for local attention during the last two weeks of August were the latest developments in and around the Persian Gulf and the latest news of the civil war that raged for some days at the city's Rikers Island jail. On Rikers, which sits in the East River and is accessible by land only by way of a bridge from the Astoria Heights section of Queens, are nine correction facilities, housing fourteen thousand inmates. Peter Vallone, the speaker of the City Council, who is from Queens, often describes it, grimly, as "the largest penal colony in the world." In the August headline competition, the international crisis naturally won out most often, but not always in the tabloids. The headlines could be confusing. For example, "POLICE WORK" on the front page of the Sunday *Times*' Week in Review section on August 19th referred to the confrontation with Saddam Hussein, and not to the five hundred city cops who on August 13th were called to stand by in riot gear and, if so ordered, to liberate the Rikers Island bridge, on which city correction officers, in an illegal job action, had blocked all traffic, or to the three thousand policemen who on August 16th, after the bridge was finally opened, were dispatched there, again in riot gear, in case the jail guards tried to seize it a second time. What had led to the blockade was an August 7th attack on a correction officer, Steven Narby, by three inmates: they had cornered him in a stairwell, breaking his jaw and a rib, and robbing him of jewelry, including a gold

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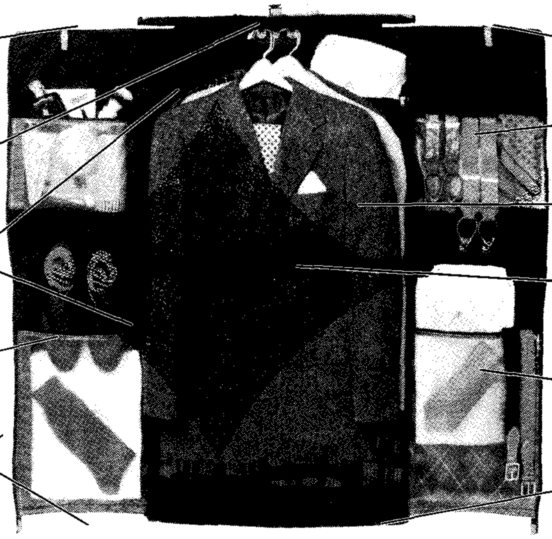

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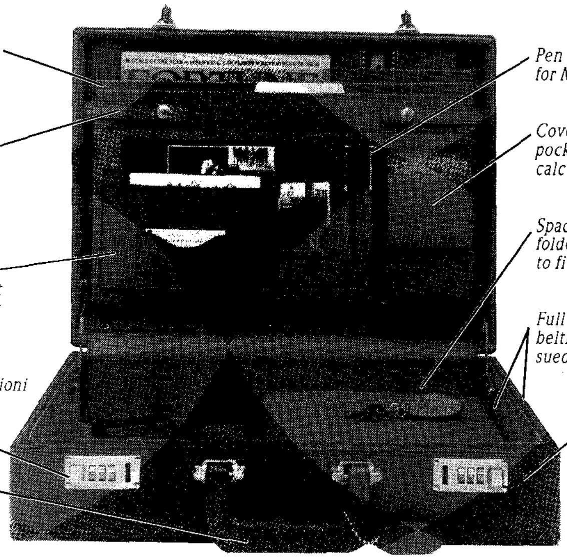

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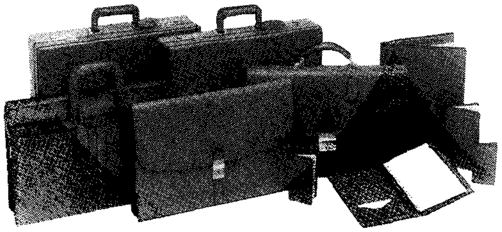

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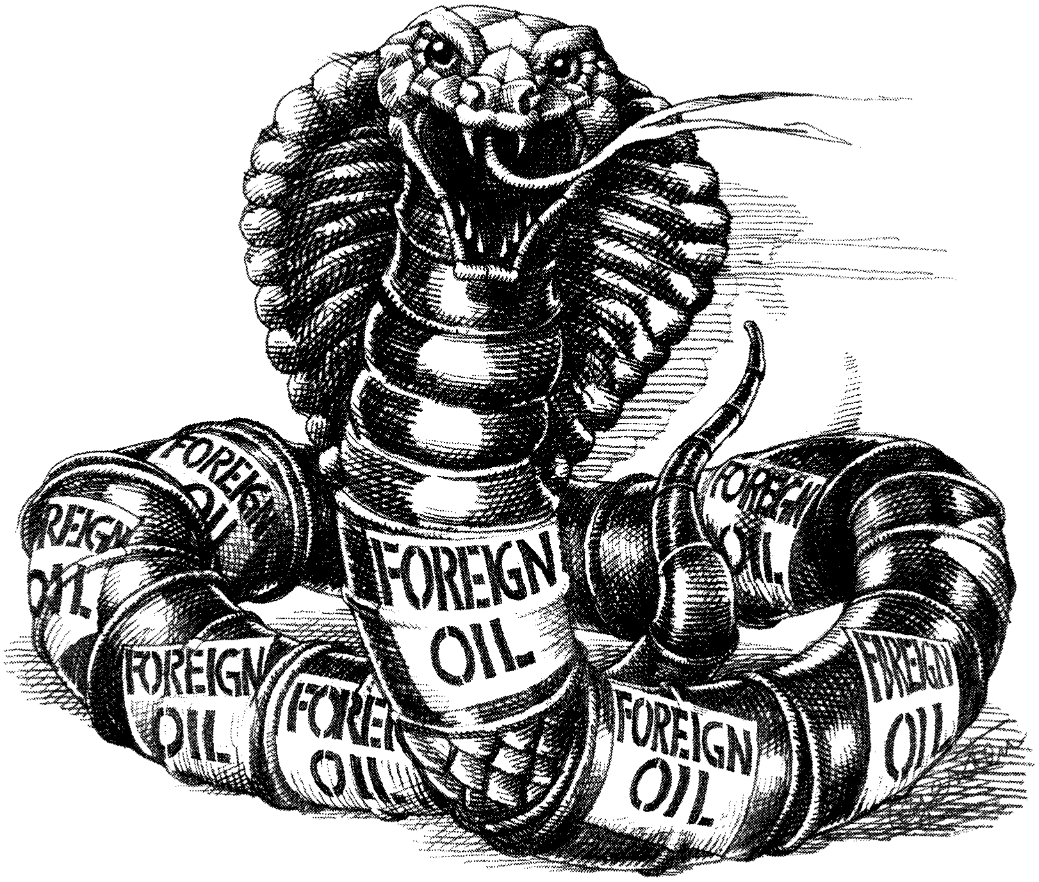
chain. Leaders of the Correction Officers Benevolent Association (COBA), in explaining why they had had no choice but to stage the illegal job action, complained that the charges filed against Narby's attackers had included assault and robbery but not attempted murder. (If murder was intended, the attempt fell far short; six days later, Narby was sufficiently recovered to join his fellow-guards who were barricading the bridge.) Also cited was another example of perceived disrespect: the Mayor had not visited Narby in the hospital, although he had gone to see a police officer who had been wounded the same day.

Many of the words and phrases in recent headlines here could have referred to events either in the Middle East or in the middle of the East River: blockades, hostages, threatened food shortages, agreements on the use of force, rising tensions. Just as Saddam Hussein had promised not to invade Kuwait, vows had been made and not kept at Rikers: according to city officials, representatives of COBA had assured them on Sunday, August 12th, that there would be no demonstration before scheduled negotiations with the city resumed the following Tuesday. After the blockade ended, Eric Schmertz, Dinkins' commissioner of labor relations, told reporters, "You have to understand that we awoke on Monday morning to find a thousand correction officers on the bridge." For two days, the guards prevented visitors and food deliveries from getting through, and also barred vans scheduled to pick up inmates and deliver them to court appointments around the city. Two thousand such appointments had to be cancelled, some of which would have resulted in releases of prisoners; a fact that is not often mentioned in news accounts is that two-thirds of Rikers' prisoners are not convicted criminals but detainees awaiting trial, in jail because they could not make bail. Among those turned back by the guards was Dinkins' correction commissioner, Allyn Sielaff, who had come to Rikers, where he has an office, to try to negotiate an agreement with union leaders that would persuade the correction officers to give the city back its bridge. He later made it to Rikers by boat. Members of the Emergency Medical Service who are in charge of the city's ambulances had been summoned to the jail complex to treat ill inmates. Not only were they blocked from coming onto the bridge but, in some cases, they were roughed up by the guards and had to be taken to local hospitals. The E.M.S. union then announced that its members would not come to Rikers unless they had a police escort. "We're afraid of those people. Not the inmates, the officers," the president of the union said. What followed was the spectacle in this unpeaceable kingdom of one group of city employees, the cops, protecting another group of city employees, the E.M.S., from being attacked by a third group of city workers, the correction officers. The guards massed on the bridge also prevented other guards, and other city workers, already on the island from leaving. These unofficial prisoners began telephoning reporters to complain that they were hostages—an uncomfortable condition somewhat eased by the fact that they were all on overtime, at an eventual cost to the city (whose 1990 budget problems are so severe that it had said it could not afford to hire the policemen it needed to combat the ballooning crime rate) of a million two hundred thousand dollars. The police who were brought in to protect the bridge from a second blockade by the guards cost eight hundred thousand in overtime.

While the stories on the Mideast crisis were full of descriptions of the President's "masterly" leadership, most references to Mayor Dinkins' leadership in the Rikers confrontation were of another sort. In Dinkins' first months in office, he had had two highs—the Nelson Mandela visit (which cost the city nearly two and a half million dollars in overtime) and the choosing of the city as the site of the next Democratic National Convention—for which he received well-deserved credit. In the latter part of the summer, however, he has been on a downhill course. He was particularly faulted for having his *staff* negotiate with the guards at the scene of the illegal blockade. "There will be no amnesty," the Mayor assured reporters while the blockade was in place, but amnesty is what the eventual settlement amounted to: the correction officers who had not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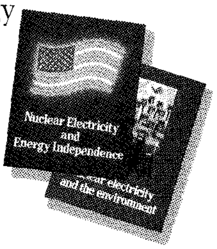
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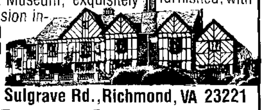

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reported for duty during the thirty-six hours of the blockade—any one of whom could claim that, like Dinkins' own corrections commissioner, he had been prevented by the mob from getting through—would have to give up one vacation day. "Obviously, each of us is wiser in hindsight," the Mayor later told reporters, in his now familiar stately, even mournful, tones. "THE LESSON OF RIKERS: DITHERING IS DEADLY" was the headline over a *News* editorial. Murray Kempton wrote in *Newsday*, "Every public official must at some point confront a mess largely of his own contrivance. Rikers Island, however smaller in history, looks like being Mayor David Dinkins' Bay of Pigs." Koch accused his successor of having suffered "a complete failure of nerve." In the *Post*, a cartoon by Bay Rigby showed the Mayor, who plays tennis every day, approaching the net. The ball coming toward him was a huge black bomb, its fuse burning dangerously, that was labelled "RIKERS." Just as the President has been bad-mouthed by nonbelievers for "recreating" at Kennebunkport while he was dispatching young soldiers to what might be a bloody war, Dinkins has been criticized for making sure that he got his daily tennis game in during the bloody troubles at Rikers. There were also complaints that the Mayor was too attentive to his favorite game in a summer when it became apparent that local crime numbers were running far ahead of the numbers last year, when there were nineteen hundred and five homicides in the city. In his column in the *News*, Mike McAlary declared that Dinkins, "running around in tennis shorts," appeared to be "numb to the death around him" and that "the city would much prefer to see the mayor's Western grip on a nightstick rather than a racquet." He repeated an exchange that reporters had overheard in Dinkins' office. Q: "How's Dinkins doing?" A: "I think he's down a set."

For those involved in a major confrontation, it is a real break when what they are on the attack against is not some abstract institution or ideology but instead has a name and a face, preferably an evil-looking one, toward which cries of outrage—or, anyhow, distinctly cross language—can be directed. Although no one has recommended that Phil Seelig, the head of the correction-officers' union, be taken out permanently—which is the prescription favored for Saddam Hussein by New York's excitable Senator Alfonse D'Amato—he has been wonderfully useful to the Dinkins administration as it strives to recover from the Rikers Island disaster and reëstablish itself in the public mind as a decisive regime, up to running the city. Commissioner Schmertz charged, in an August 17th letter to Seelig (who doesn't look any more evil than the next sandy-haired, bearded New Yorker), that the COBA leader, by having "willfully misrepresented an essential term of the agreement" with the city, "may have been a primary cause" of the disturbance at Rikers on August 14th. On that night, according to numerous accounts, some two hundred correction officers lined up inmates against the walls of one jail facility and hit them with long sticks, injuring a hundred and forty-four and sending more than fifty to hospitals on the mainland. The blockade had ended about six o'clock, after Seelig emerged from a meeting on the island with Schmertz and other officials and announced the agreement on the union's grievances. "We're Number One! We're Number One!" he shouted, jumping on top of a van. "We got just about everything we wanted!" And, he added, "The use-of-force directive has been eliminated." From the beginning, union leaders had called the use-of-force question the most important on the grievance list. The prevailing rules, imposed in 1988 by Federal Judge Morris Lasker, in settlement of a Legal Aid Society suit, specifically forbade the guards to use "impermissible force" against inmates, giving two and a half pages of examples, such as "striking an inmate's head against the wall or floor." Schmertz declared in his August 17th letter that the rules as they were revised in the agreement involved only a simplification of language that in no way limited, liberalized, or softened the restrictions on the use of force. In any case, as Seelig well knew, all changes would have to be approved by Judge Lasker. Seelig was asked a few days later why he had exaggerated what he won at the bargaining table on the use-of-force issue, and he answered, "What was I supposed to say—that we lost?"

Many of the correction officers who surged into Rikers on the evening of August 14th, after the blockade ended, had been blocking the bridge for the

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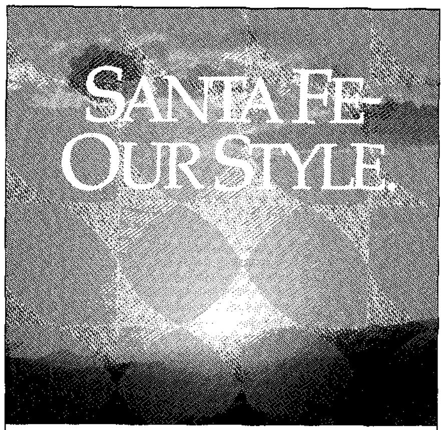

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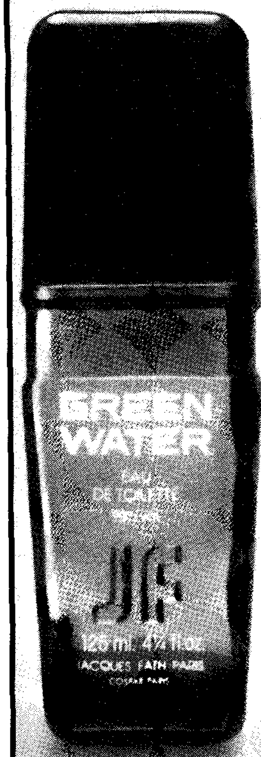
better part of two days. Barbecue parties had been thrown on the lawns of Astoria Heights residents (the next night, inmates were sent out to clean up after their jailers) and quantities of beer consumed. Seelig's news that the use-of-force limitations no longer applied had also reached the prisoners. They put on sweaters, jackets, and any other available outer clothing to protect themselves from the beatings—the "payback"—that they now expected. According to testimony at an August 29th hearing of the State Commission of Corrections in Albany, at which Sielaff was present, many of them were dragged out of their beds, ordered to remove their extra clothes, and forced to run a gantlet of club-wielding correction officers until, in some cases, they fell to the floor. Some were then lined up on either side of a corridor, where they were systematically beaten. James Lawrence, the commission's forensic investigator, testified that medical evidence showed that "the violence was extreme, unnecessary and . . . unprecedented in my experience." Later on the night of August 14th, Richard Wolf, the executive director of the city's Board of Correction—whose nine members, nominated by the Mayor, the City Council, and appellate-court-level judges, are charged with monitoring the operations of the Department of Correction—arrived at Rikers, to find the head of the medical service bandaging inmates and dispatching them to hospitals. Wolf had a videotape made of the scene in the corridor. When reporters called Commissioner Sielaff the next day at his Rikers Island office, he said that there had been "no retaliation," and that there was no evidence that excessive force had been used. Many of his staff members continued to insist for several days that this was the case, and he ordered them not to make written reports of the incident. No reporters had been allowed on the scene since the troubles began, so all news except what was provided by members of the Board of Correction or, later, Legal Aid lawyers had to come by telephone, mostly from inmates. One call by an inmate to the *Amsterdam News*, made on the night of August 16th, described the beatings in great detail. As the guards attacked, the inmate said, they had worn their riot gear, which he described as "helmets, big rectangular plastic shields that they hold in one hand that cover their bodies . . . and their special sticks in the other hand." The stick, he explained, "is like a broomstick; it's like two night sticks in one. . . . So they can hit you without getting close to you. With the shields and sticks, they looked like something out of the Middle Ages." There were handprints on the walls, he told the *Amsterdam News*, which were not those of inmates, who had been forced to keep their hands on top of their heads, but those of correction officers: "They had gloves on so they wouldn't leave fingerprints, just bloody handprints." This and other telephoned reports, and the videotape as well, should be useful to the numerous official inquiries that are currently under way, including one by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Reporters were not allowed on the scene until August 29th. Robert Kasanof, the head of the Board of Correction, had urged that they be invited in far earlier. "It is a berserk irony," he said a few days after the beatings, "that Ted Koppel is in Baghdad and Sam Donaldson is in Saudi Arabia, and no reporter is permitted on the island and none was permitted during the riots and ensuing violence."

Keeping reporters off Rikers when important news was being made there was not necessarily distressing for Dinkins to contemplate. He often gives the impression that dealings with the press are his least favorite chore. Last month, a reporter asked him if he had anything to say about the observation by Koch, who now writes a weekly column for the *Post*, that the low-key tones in which he responds to alarming local crime news—as he responds to nearly everything else—might not inspire public confidence. (President of the City Council Andrew Stein had gone so far as to urge that the National Guard be called out.) The Mayor said, "I don't respond to every comment from a former mayor—now a *journalist*," his voice as he said that last word heavy with sarcasm. Except during an occasional crisis, like that at Rikers, Dinkins press conferences are such unlively affairs—the initial press release says it all—that City Hall reporters, and even officials whose attendance at the events the press release announces, often may not show up for them. The only headlined quote that came out of the Dinkins City Hall last month was a reflection of a reporter's

From Paris, by Jacques Fath



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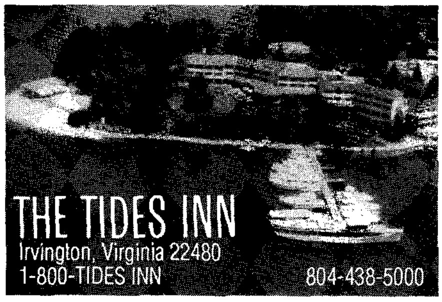

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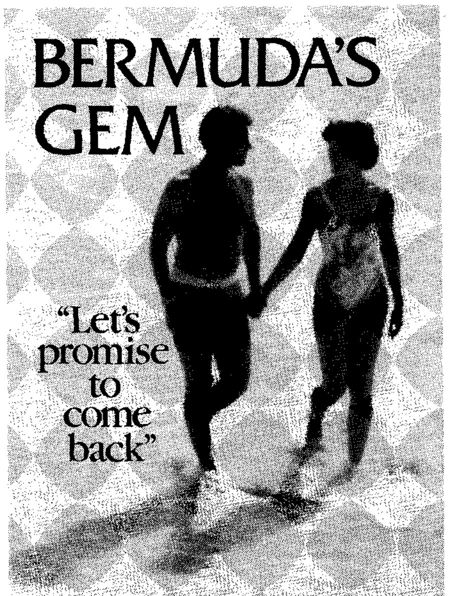
question. Q: "Mr. Mayor, many New Yorkers say the city is out of control, and that New York has turned into Dodge City." A: "It is not out of control, and it is not Dodge City." Trying to punch things up, one reporter phoned Dodge City (pop., 20,000; homicides last year, 1) and found that the present mayor of that town has no interest in visiting this one. Another looked up the stats and compared the crime rate here with that of Dodge City in 1878, when it was in its historic heyday, and Bat Masterson, the legendary gunslinger, was the sheriff. That year, the homicide rate, 1.7 per thousand, was in fact noticeably higher than New York's .26 per thousand in 1989. No one mentioned that in 1903 Bat Masterson left the Wild West for the Wild East, settling in this city, where, until his death at his desk, eighteen years later, he worked as a reporter and sports editor for the *Morning Telegraph*—that is, as a *journalist*.

The city's new mayor could, of course, make a good deal more noise and draw a bigger crowd at City Hall if he were willing to bad-mouth his adversaries as mayors before him were known to do. In recent weeks, however, he showed an unaccustomed willingness to raise his voice—or very nearly so—on the subject of Seelig. "I think that he doesn't seem to care sufficiently for his people, or our city, given the fashion in which he has behaved of late" was the way Dinkins put it. Meanwhile, Seelig, by demonstrating various ways to make a bad situation much worse, was doing Dinkins the favor of diverting attention from his bad handling of a bad situation. Just about the only consoling aspect of the Rikers Island confrontation between inmates and guards was that, for once in this city, everything didn't all come down to racism. The inmates are about ninety per cent black and Latino, the correction officers are nearly seventy-five per cent minority. (The percentage of black inmates—about fifty-seven per cent—is only about a point higher than that of the guards.) On August 22nd, Seelig, who is white, assured *News* reporters and editors that Dinkins had taken the side of the inmates for political reasons. "The Mayor is a minority mayor," said the COBA leader—and therefore would not be disposed to alienate minority inmates and their families. A few days later, the black correction



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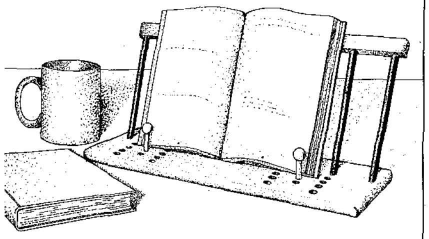

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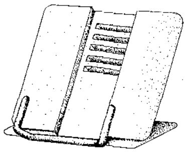

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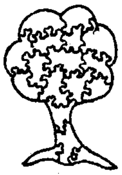

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officers' fraternity announced plans for either an impeachment or a recall proceeding against Seelig, who at his last election won by a two-to-one margin. The following day, it was sexism's turn. The Rikers inmates, Seelig said, were threatening to take women officers hostage and rape them. "I want to know what the Mayor is doing to prevent this from happening," he said at a press conference. The organization of women guards announced that it, too, would try to bring about his impeachment, for the sexist suggestion that they could not take care of themselves. No one—as of now—was proposing the removal of Commissioner Sielaff, who is white, but some correction officers might take it under advisement. On August 25th, in a front-page story in the *Times*, he boasted that one of his achievements since he took office, in March, had been to prevent the signing on of thirty-six crack dealers who would otherwise have been hired as guards. There had been few background checks on guards before he arrived on the scene, he said, raising questions about the backgrounds of the correction officers already on the roster (some of the well-publicized attacks of inmates on guards are said to be the result of drug deals gone wrong) and about the validity of Seelig's complaint about the Mayor and his supposed inmate constituency. "They're the enemy," Seelig had said. "We're the good guys." Evidence was discovered that Seelig might have a particular enthusiasm for the banging-of-inmates'-heads-against-the-wall measure forbidden under the 1988 Lasker rules. A 1987 report by the State Commission of Correction had included an account of an incident in which one of its monitors had seen an inmate beaten to the ground and his head smashed against a wall by correction officers while Seelig was "encouraging the officers to continue striking the inmate."

On August 29th, it was announced that Judge Lasker had revised the modified use-of-force rules to which the city had agreed in order to end the blockade. He had extended the agreement by eight pages, part of which were devoted to spelling out examples of impermissible use of force against inmates, including the banging of their heads against walls. The next day, the Mayor was asked at a press conference about the state commission's denunciation of the beating of inmates at Rikers, beatings that his correction commissioner had initially denied had taken place. Dinkins response was "I am satisfied with the running of the corrections system."

On the day of the commission hearings, the Mayor had spent nearly the entire day playing tennis or watching the United States Open tennis matches in Queens. His press spokesman explained to Rita Delfiner, of the *Post*, that during the Open the Mayor would be "tennis-oriented," just as he would be "Democratic Convention-oriented" in the summer of 1992. On August 16th, he had been happy to be able to change the subject from the problems of the city's correction system by making an announcement that showed him to have acted decisively on a topic that is of great interest to him. Joined by Borough President Claire Shulman, he had asked the Federal Aviation Authority for some relief from airplane noise during the two weeks, beginning August 27th, of the Open, which is held at the National Tennis Center, in Flushing Meadow Park, right next door to LaGuardia Airport. The F.A.A., the Mayor announced, had obliged them with the word that for those two weeks planes would take off not over the courts but over the water. John Stapleton, the Inquiring Photographer for the *News*, immediately asked seven New Yorkers (his daily allotment of inquirees) whether someone—presumably the Mayor—should demand that flight patterns be shifted to give similar noise relief during the Mets' eighty-one-home-game season at Shea Stadium, which is also next to LaGuardia. Two said yes. Three voted no, one of them explaining that being inured to the noise gave the Mets a home-field advantage. One said there were more important things for the Mayor to be working on. The seventh said, "Absolutely," noting that the takeoffs would be over Rikers Island, "and that's okay." There, presumably, the noise would go entirely unnoticed.

—ANDY LOGAN

•

The bride is a graduate of Buena High School and attended the Academy of Arts. She is pursuing an acting career.

The groom is an entrepreneur.

After a wedding trip to Nicaragua, Lithuania and Beirut, the couple will live in Burbank.—*Ventura (Calif.) Star-Free Press.*

With any luck.

BOOKS

B.B.

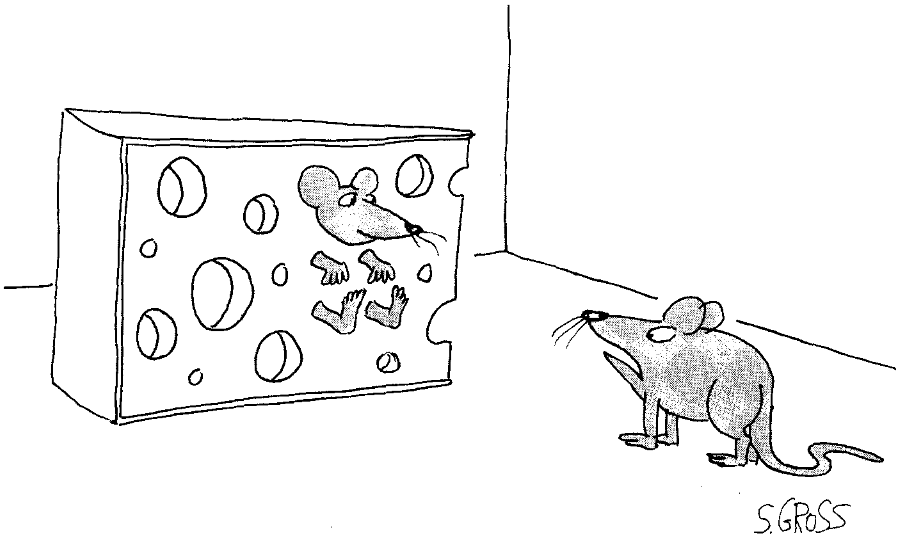
THE tumultuous throng that poured westward through the rents in the Berlin Wall last November emptied the supermarkets and the video shops. Within hours, there was neither fast food nor deodorant left. West Berlin emporiums were stripped of their ample supplies of soft- and sometimes hard-core porno videocassettes. T-shirts and jeans, a currency across the Wall in the days of the two Germanys, flew off the shelves. Wide-eyed and knowing, moving to the beat of heavy metal and rock, which, clandestine or overt, had been the odes to freedom throughout Eastern Europe, the young and not so young enacted the first TV revolution. Once "Dallas" had come their way (it could be picked up several hundred kilometres east of Checkpoint Charlie), once tapes of Western soap operas and rock jamborees could be multiplied and sold beyond the "Dallas line," the cataclysm and saturnalia were inevitable. Television sparked the great, wild surge toward a consumer economy, and television packaged (brilliantly) the actual rush. Why live by bread alone when there is peanut butter? Why endure as a Soviet satellite when the word "satellite" means cable television?

The gains have been tremendous. Regimes of hideous stupidity, of corrupt despotism, of inefficiency beyond credence have been broken. Slowly, human beings east of Berlin and the Oder-Neisse are regaining their self-respect, their liberty of motion, their sense of a possible future. More slowly, but tangibly nonetheless, the hidden dimensions of the iceberg of past massacres, lies, sadistic charades are surfacing. The corpses cry out, the shades of the tortured and the obliterated take on uncanny substance. History is beginning to reënter the uncertain light of truth. Not since 1789 has Europe felt so alive, so inebriate with possibility. Both the Soviet Union and the United States are receding into colossal, lamed—if occasionally belligerent—provinciality. The ancient bells of Prague and Kraków can be heard across sombre but living ground. Leningrad and Odessa are again opening their windows on the Western light (the talismanic image of Russian nineteenth-century liberals). The violence and the cant in Romania are fearsome, but even there it is difficult to envisage a recession to the lunatic past. Only an irresponsible mandarin would fail to exult in this season of hope.

But there are losses. Marxism, being itself the product of an intelligentsia, notably in East Germany, felt committed to certain archaic, paternalistic ideals of high literacy, of literary-academic culture. Classical theatre and music, the publication of the classics flourished. Because it carried within its raucous facility and mass seductiveness the germ of anarchic protest, much of what is shoddiest in modernity, in the media, in down-market entertainment was kept (partly) at bay. Now the conductors and the performers are leaving the more than seventy symphony orchestras financed by the East German government. The professors are draining away. The poets, the thinkers wonder whether they can compete on the futures market of commercial choices. Oppression happens to be the mother of metaphor. In the supermarket, Goethe is a lossmaker. These losses, however, are, at an immediate level, luxury losses, and are perhaps recoverable. The minus signs on the balance sheet cut deeper but are much more difficult to define.

After the Mosaic-prophetic summons to justice, after early Christianity, Marxism constituted the third of the major blueprints of hope. When Marx, in the famous 1844 manuscripts, imagined a society in which love and solidarity, rather than money and competitive hatreds, would be exchanged among human beings, he was simply rephrasing the summons to transcendence of Jeremiah, of Amos, and of the Gospels. When he urged a kingdom of social justice, of classless fraternity on earth, he was translating into secular terms the sunburst of the messianic. We know—I suppose we always knew—that such summonings were utopian: that human beings are more or less gifted carnivores; and that man is wolf to man. What is even grimmer, we know now—and should have known since the utopian fantasies of Plato—that ideals of equality, of communal rationality, of self-sacrificial austerity can be enforced only at totally unacceptable costs. Human egotism, the competitive pulse, the lust for waste and display can be suffocated only by tyrannical violence. And, in turn, those who practice such violence themselves wither into corruption. Ineluctably, collectivist-socialist ideals seem to lead to one or another form of the Gulag.

Such knowledge lessens us. It makes louder the yawp of money in the marketplaces of the West and, even more stridently, on the black markets around the Brandenburg Gate and on the once comely squares of Prague. Moribund utopias leave venom behind. The drug pusher, the salesman of kitsch, the hoodlum have moved into the East



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European and Russian vacuum. The Marxist dream turned to unpardonable nightmare, but the new daydreams are rabid; tribalism, regional chauvinism, nationalist loathings are blazing from Soviet Asia to Transylvania, from the skinheads of East Berlin to the muggers of Croatia and Kosovo. With them comes inevitably the hatred of Jews—the intuition that the Marxist program of internationalism, of the abolition of frontiers, was radically tainted by Judaic universalism. Trotsky was, after all, a Jew. So once again the old crazy drums of irredentist territorial claims and ethnic autonomy are pounding in the jungle of the cities.

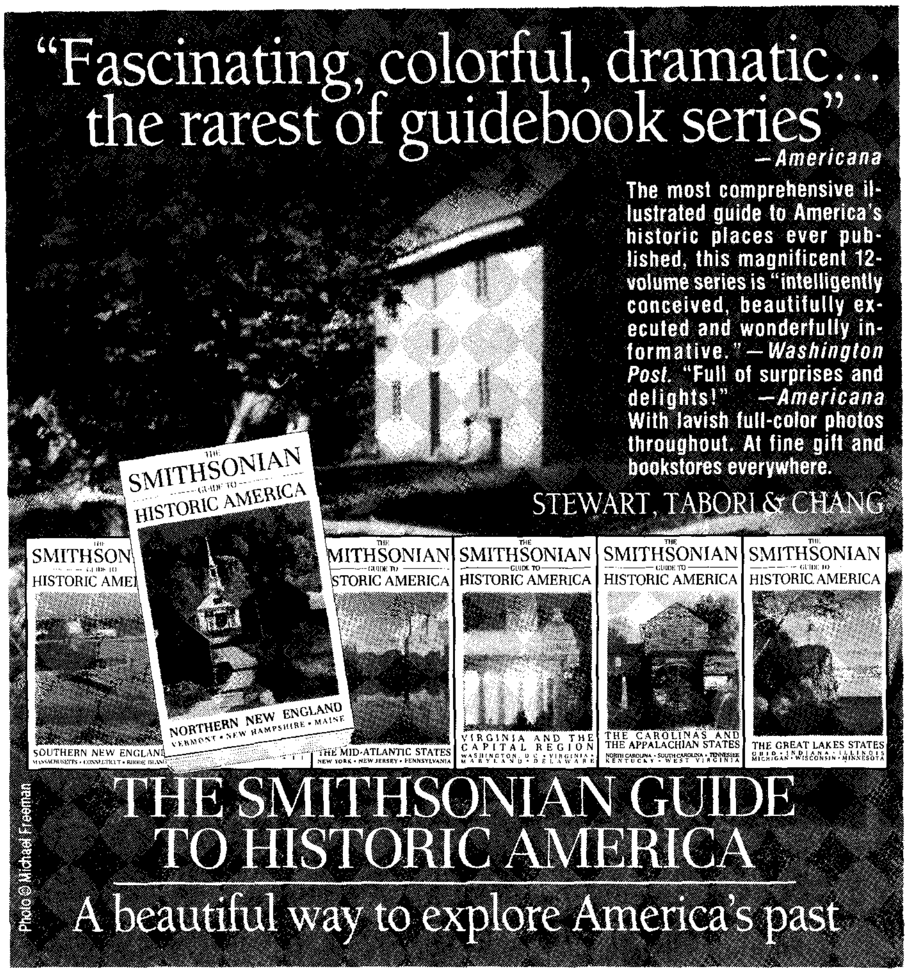
THERE is, of course, scarcely a sentence I have written up to this point which does not incorporate, more or less directly, a phrase, an idea, an ambiguity out of Bertolt Brecht. I just adapted the titles of two early masterpieces: "Drums in the Night" and "In the Jungle of Cities." No lyric poet, no dramatist, no pamphleteer has given sharper voice to the hymns of money, has rendered more palpable the stench of greed. Few minds have seen more unsparingly into the cant and into the fluent self-deceptions that oil the wheels of profit and make outwardly hygienic the power relations in mercantilism and mass-consumption capitalism. At the same time, and often inside the same Aesopian, oblique texts, Brecht bore witness to the cynicism, to the ruses (he was the most cunning of survivors, catlike in his sinuous maneuvers and landings) needed if one was to endure in the homicidal labyrinth of Leninism and Stalinism. In Brecht's greatest poems (some are among the finest in our century), in his best plays, in the innumerable songs of rebellion and scarred hope which he inspired and sang, the ultimate key is minor, the beat, though sometimes imperceptibly, downward. "Man Is Man" (another famous title)—man's avarice, his cowardice, his frenetic selfishness will most likely prevail. Mother Courage, her children slain, the land made waste, harnesses herself to her fatal cart: armaments for sale. The stage turns and turns. History is a self-inflicted treadmill. The visions of justice turn to red apocalypse. What will remain of our cities is, as a great early lyric proclaims, the black winds that have swept through them. Yet the absurd, murdering dreams were worth dreaming. Knowingness is not knowledge, however accurate it turns out to have been. Those who were wrong, hideously wrong, like the Bolsheviks, the Communards in France in 1871, the International brigades in the Spanish Civil War, the millions who died proclaiming their fidelity to Stalin, were, in a paradoxical, profoundly tragic way, less wrong than the clairvoyant, than the ironists and the yuppies, than the Madison Avenue hype peddlers and the jobbers "bellowing" on the floor of the bourse. (The image is from W. H. Auden, whom Brecht knew, for a time, as Comrade Auden.) It is better to have been hallucinated by justice than to have been awakened to junk food. The cruiser whose blank shot initiated the Petrograd uprising was named Aurora, or Dawn. So felt Brecht, "who came out of the Black Forest."

And seems to have come almost fully formed, like some incubus ready to wreak mischief. The Brecht intonations, the cunning gait, the corner-of-the-mouth wit, the carapace of the tightrope walker tensed for survival are there in the earliest of the "Letters, 1913-1956," selected, edited, and annotated by John Willett and translated into straight, faithful English by Ralph Manheim (Routledge; $39.95). Bertolt Brecht is only fifteen when we pick up the trail. But the credo has been arrived at: "To combine fidelity to nature with idealism—that is art." And so is the fierce insight. Brecht has a poem in mind: "In the afternoon the enemy is defeated." (We are in November, 1914.) Joy on one side, rage and despair on the other: "This is a night when mothers weep." Nothing revelatory in that, but then the Brecht stroke: "On *both* sides." Those impotent tears were to fill his works. Mothers—militant, blind, cynical, idealistic—recur over and over. Later, Brecht would turn Gorky's "The Mother" into a play very much his own. But B.B. himself did not weep. April, 1918, a month before his call-up: "These are heavenly days. . . . At night we sing songs by Goethe, Wedekind and Brecht. Everybody loves us. . . . And I love everybody. . . . I'd sooner have victors than victory. . . . You will conquer the world and listen to my teaching, and you will die old and surfeited with life like Job who was admired by 100 camels. And then, together, we shall reform hell and make something of it." This to Caspar Neher, Brecht's lifelong colleague, collaborator, designer. The entire program is set: to reform, to make something of hell, be hell the defeated Germany after 1918, the crazed hive of refugees when Hitler came to power, the tin pots of Californian exile, or the gray gangsterism of the East German regime.

The "everybody" Brecht loves comprises a bevy of Rosies, Helenes, Ruths. Bullheaded, ungainly, prone to bohemian vulgarities, systematically promiscuous, B.B. fascinated women. He used them and used them up, as Baal does in the early autobiographical play. For Brecht, a ménage à trois meant meagre fare. At times, his caravan (those hundred worshipful camels) included at least two accredited mistresses and their brood. Helene Weigel (the association dates from 1923) was to reign supreme—officially, at least. Brecht came to find indispensable her genius as an actress and her rigor as a Communist. But other involvements proliferated. With Carola Neher, with Ruth Berlau—at a terrible cost to the women involved. When Carola Neher was sucked into the Stalinist death machine, Brecht gauged, with almost inhuman caution and dispassion, the limits to which he might go in (vain) attempts to save her. Ruth Berlau collapsed into near-madness. In Mack the Knife, there is more than a touch of Brecht's cavalier sexuality and, one suspects, contempt for the subservience of women to male appetites. "The shark has teeth": creative genius has needs and licenses.

"The Threepenny Opera" is by no means Brecht's best work. It is unimaginable without the brazen bark and lilt of Kurt Weill's music. But it caught and stylized precisely a certain sour-sweet eleventh hour in Western history. Like no other work, it conveys the macabre vitality, the self-lacerating grin of the Weimar twilight. "The theatre is dead," Brecht trumpets throughout 1926 and 1927, but the cadaver can be jolted into feverish life. And in terms of celebrity and earning power those three pennies made Brecht indestructible from 1928 on.

Which was more than fortunate. Hitler makes a very early appearance in the letters, "shitting on Moses Iglstein" in a Munich park in March, 1923. Brecht kept a wary eye on his fellow word-spinner. But his attitudes toward Nazism are complicated, and laced with dialectical-materialist theo-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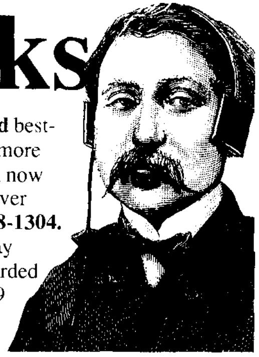

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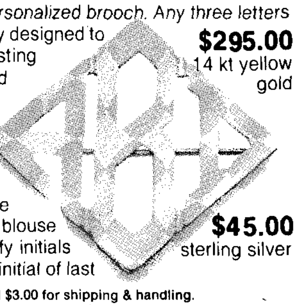
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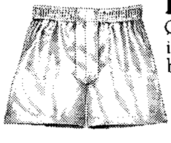
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ry. National Socialism represents for Brecht and his K.P.D. comrades the logical, perfectly predictable terminal phase of capitalism. Its organized violence and bureaucratic efficacy both fulfill and travesty the industrial-assembly-line processes and the book-keeping conventions of Western free-market institutions. Hitler's triumph—this was the appalling, suicidal error of the German Communists—would be brief. It would unleash the authentic proletarian revolution and bring with it the final collapse of the Wall Street empire. To prevent that triumph might well be to falsify the laws of history.

THE carnival of street battles, monetary collapse, and erotic emancipation suited Brecht's observant, analytic sensibility. The period from 1927 to Hitler's takeover in 1933 is one of the most fertile in his career. His several strengths came together. We follow in these letters the hammering out of Brecht's didacticism, his Aristotelian-Marxist conviction that the theatre represents a matchless teaching instrument—that a play is always also a potential manual for human sociopolitical perceptions and conduct. Very much in the manner of such German predecessors as Lessing and Schiller, Brecht sets out to be a teacher, a moral preceptor. His plays are *Lehrstücke*, or "teaching pieces." At the same time, the formal experimenter comes into his own. Even today, a "song play" such as "Mahagonny" remains radically innovative. Brecht breaks with realism and the lyric, Expressionist eloquence of his first dramas. The cabaret, the boxing ring, the cinema enter into his technical and perceptual means. Brecht is among the very earliest masters of radio drama. (See "Lindbergh's Flight.") He experiments with choral techniques and masks. Adopting the modes of collage and montage as these were being exploited by contemporary painters and filmmakers, Brecht incorporates into his poems and dramas the texts of other writers. His adaptations of Gay's "The Beggar's Opera," of Marlowe's "Edward II," of Kipling's ballads and military tales are metamorphic. From the original source they excavate elements marvellously tailored to Brecht's tone and purpose. Jazz, blues, Negro spirituals, Lutheran German, Elizabethan tragedy, the thieves' laments of Villon are interwoven in Brecht's voice.

The best of the letters are "from the workshop." Brecht wastes little motion on personal concerns. He is no letter writer in the manner of Keats or of Proust. His letters are neither drafts of incipient texts nor introspective meditations. They are blueprints for productions, organizational bulletins, rough-edged polemics against obtuse critics and sloppy executants. Brecht keeps a cold eye on contracts, royalties, foreign rights. He labors to institutionalize and sustain a Communist stage company, a workers' theatre, a Red cultural front against the mounting Nazi tide. "The trouble with intellectuals is that what starts as feelings ends in a hangover," he writes to the director Erwin Piscator. Brecht feels at home with designers, stagehands, musicians, cabaret folk. He wears his leather jacket and chews on a wet, heavy cigar. Theory is all very well. (There are cordial, respectful exchanges with the unorthodox Marxist thinker Karl Korsch.) But it is praxis that counts. A new marching song (to the tune of "Tipperary") "could be sung with a pointer in front of projected photos." The pointer must be found, the projector must work in the smoky basement or the provincial cinema. Even a crude parable, Stalinist in spirit, such as the "Massnahme" ("The Measures to Be Taken") can have its tactical, pedagogic uses. The masses are bewildered; the hour is late.

WHEN the hour came, in the spring of 1933, Brecht was able to flee: Prague, Vienna, Zurich, Lugano, Paris, New York. B.B. joined the maelstrom of refugees, of the overnight stateless, of the gypsy intellectuals and artists. With a difference: he was a celebrity. He siphoned out of the Reich his immediate family and members of his entourage and found moneys abroad. He chose Denmark as asylum. The "dark times" had begun. They were to prove productive. Brecht wrestled to achieve a political diagnosis consonant with both dialectical historicism and the actual situation. His inner acrobatics make for fascinating reading. To Korsch in January, 1934:

> There are compelling reasons for German fascism, which do not apply to other countries. The bourgeois democracies may look wistfully at the way in which wages can be cut in Germany and the unemployed enslaved, but they also see drawbacks. . . . Fascism is a stiff drink; you have to be chilled to the bone, and a *quick* coup

must have prospects of success. Unfortunately, we still haven't the faintest idea of the significance of the World War. Its origins remain shrouded in dense fog. The "salvation of Germany" could never have been achieved in the old democratic form. Regimented as it was, the proletariat was no longer capable of either a foreign or a domestic policy. . . . That of course is a very special situation.

Friends and fellow-exiles, among them Walter Benjamin, came to stay with Brecht. "Fear and Misery of the Third Reich," a ferocious set of stage vignettes, could be performed by refugee troupes and left-front companies outside Germany. There was Paul Hindemith, an early collaborator, to be ironically instructed: "You seem to have tried to set phone books to music." Neoclassicism and ivory-tower distaste are no longer of any use; they are regressive, but not in the ways of National Socialist reaction and atavistic barbarism. Among Brecht's callers was Ferdinand Reyher, a Hollywood writer he had known in Berlin. Why not write a film script on the censorship and inquisitorial suppression of rational truths—on, say, the persecution and recantation of Galileo?

Brecht's "Galileo" was completed in the autumn of 1938, and is the subtlest of his major inventions. Its muted, constrained force, its oddly divided focus—this is a play about the suffocation of free intellectual inquiry *and* about the sociopolitical irresponsibility of pure scientific pursuits—point to the core crisis in Brecht's outlook. Neither John Willett's often nostalgically "Party line" commentary nor the letters here provided tell the whole story. But the main lines are evident. It was during the summer and autumn of 1938 that Brecht distanced himself from official Marxism-Leninism and the realities of the Soviet system. A number of Brecht's intimates and friends were vanishing into Stalinist camps. His own more inventive works were being attacked as "formalist" or as inappropriate to the concrete requirements of Soviet and Party policies. Brecht may have come to understand the tragic myopia of Stalin's and the Comintern's strategy of fighting against socialists—in Spain, in Germany—rather than against Fascists and Nazis. The imminent Hitler-Stalin Pact did not altogether surprise B.B.'s disenchanted eye.

The result was a largely private position of some complexity. He did not condemn the U.S.S.R. outright. On the

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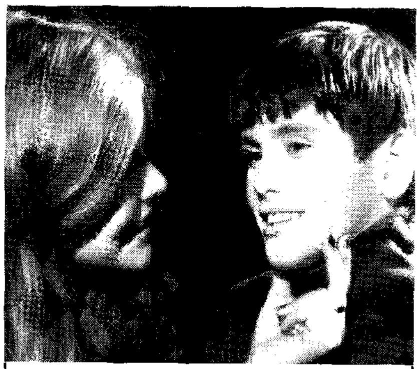

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contrary. "The regime, the state apparatus, the Party, its leadership if you will, are developing the country's productive forces," he wrote. "They are also being developed by the national form in which the Soviet Union must enter into the decisive struggle. And there you have the class character of international politics. The world civil war." Brecht's detestation of bourgeois capitalism remained visceral, his intimations of its impending doom as cheerily anarchic as ever. But much in this prophetic loathing, in both its psychology and its means of articulation, harks back to the bohemian nose-thumbing of his youth and to a kind of Lutheran moralism. His acute antennae told him of the stench of bureaucracy, of the gray petit-bourgeois coercions that prevailed in Mother Russia. Even as Martin Heidegger was during this same time developing an inward, "private National Socialism" (the expression comes from an S.S. file), so Brecht was expounding for and to himself a satiric, analytic Communism alien to Stalinist orthodoxy and also to the simplistic needs of the proletariat and the left intelligentsia in the West. For both men, these internalized tactics were highly generative: of a major philosophy and aesthetics in Heidegger's case, of preëminent poetic and theatrical creations in Brecht's.

When the moment came for renewed flight, Brecht acted with phenomenal astuteness. After an interim stay in Sweden and then in Finland, Brecht just before the Nazi assault on Russia (in which his son Frank was to die fighting with the Wehrmacht) travelled across the entire Soviet Union. Keeping a very low profile, this virtuoso of survival then finessed his domestic caravan across the Pacific to Santa Monica and Hollywood. B.B. is said to have replied when Walter Benjamin—himself soon to die a hounded fugitive—asked whether the great playwright would seek haven in Moscow, "I am a Communist, not an idiot."

America had long been a sort of phonetic source of wonder to Brecht. The mere words "Minnesota" and "Mississippi" rang with ambiguous enchantment and menace. He had felt repelled and magnetized by the "jungle" of Manhattan and by what he read and intuited of the slaughterhouses and crazed winds of Chicago. In Weill's tunes to Brecht's lyrics, American elements and syncopations were frequent.

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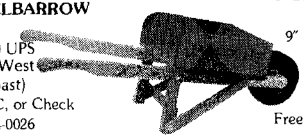

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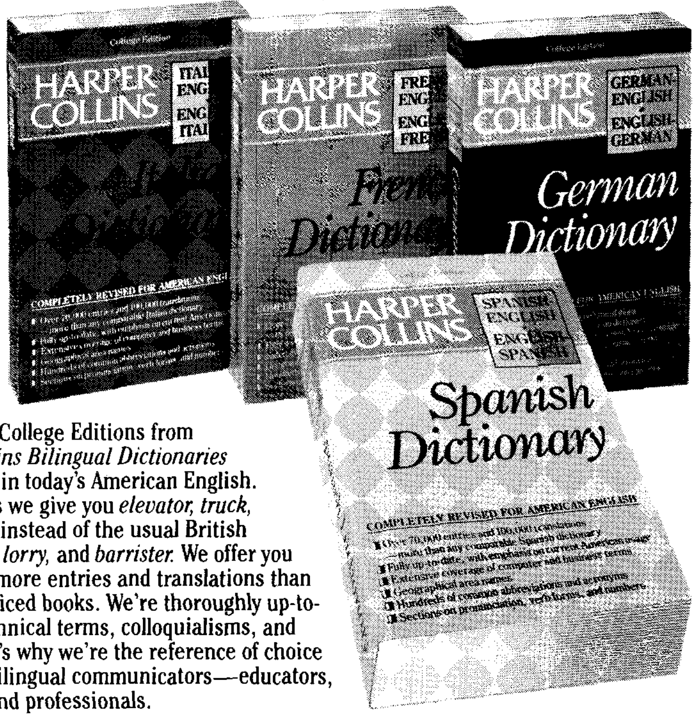
The realities of wartime California were somewhat different. There have in recent years been books and plays about the German, Central European, and Jewish refugee lives around Los Angeles. They tell a sardonic tale. Such lions as Thomas Mann held tight-lipped court. Franz Werfel flourished in the dulcet shade of the "Song of Bernadette" (his blockbuster best-seller). Arnold Schoenberg strove bitterly for recognition. (He was refused a Guggenheim.) Lesser fry buzzed and begged, improvised hectically, scrabbled for minor teaching posts, and intrigued against each other with the nastiness of need. Brecht observed the snake pit and trod lightly through it. Once again, stress and marginality proved highly productive.

These are the years of "Mother Courage" (perhaps the most convincing of the full-scale dramas) and of "The Trial of Lucullus," a radio play later set to superb, neglected music by Roger Sessions. In the midst of Hitler's victories, Brecht shaped the enigmatic "Good Person of Setzuan," the wryest of his parables, and "Mr. Puntila," his dramatization of the theme of master and servant; the Hitler satire "The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui" accompanied Brecht's luggage. Who in America but Charles Laughton could truly incarnate the towering, intricate persona of Galileo?

There were, however, few takers. Despite the understanding of translators and critics like Eric Bentley, Brecht's demands, the idiosyncrasies of his stage techniques, and the extreme discipline they required from actors and producers proved intractable. Kurt Weill's "One Touch of Venus" boomed on Broadway. Brecht found himself seeking out little theatres or offering his skills as adapter, reviser, and auxiliary director to such fringe ventures as Elisabeth Bergner's version of Webster's "Duchess of Malfi." Only "Galileo" ever reached the New York stage. Occasional movie scripts and the sale of the rights to the novel version of Brecht's "Simone Machard" kept the pot boiling, but the princely renown of Thomas Mann, together with Weill's success, got under Brecht's skin. So did the perennial, more and more strident miseries of Ruth Berlau. "You seem determined to do everything and neglect nothing to make me really bitter," he wrote to her. "Do you really want to turn our exile



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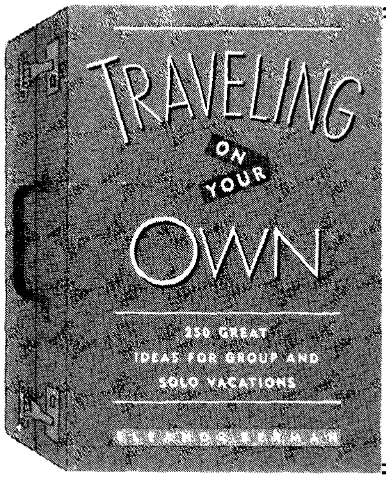

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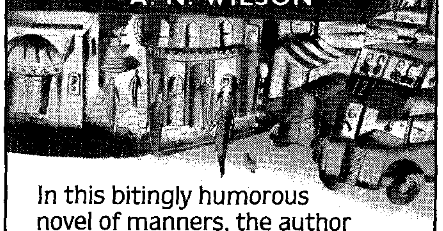

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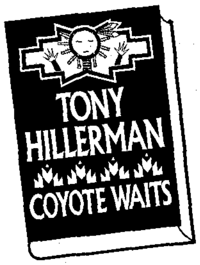

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into an endless lovestory with ups and downs, reproaches, doubts, fits of despair, threats, etc. etc.?"

But the root trouble, to be sure, was the false situation Brecht found himself in ideologically. As a Marxist, he saw scant virtues in Roosevelt's New Deal. What pained him about F.D.R.'s death was that it elevated the detestable Churchill to the apparent leadership of the Western alliance. Shrewdly, Brecht saw through the temporary love feast between the capitalist democracies of the West and the heroic folk of Stalingrad. He knew so much more about "Uncle Joe" than did his entranced California hosts or the fellow-travellers who came his feline way that he anticipated both the incipient Cold War and the surge of right-wing witch-hunts in the United States. Characteristically muffled, Brecht's letters, even to familiars, give only hints of what must have been his ironic, impatient solitude. When the Un-American Activities Committee and the F.B.I. came knocking—absurdly, Brecht's links with Gerhard Eisler were thought to have possible bearing on atomic espionage—B.B. was prepared. The Washington hearing took place on October 30, 1947. Brecht landed in Paris on November 1st.

The letters translated in this generous offering allow only incomplete glimpses of the tortuous history of Brecht's final years. B.B. came home to Marxist East Germany via Zurich. An Austrian passport and a Swiss bank account were the discreet safety net. His beginnings in Paradise Regained were thorny. The place gave Brecht "the creeps." His flirtations with modernism and formalism in music and theatrical techniques displeased the gray mastiffs of "socialist realism"—as did his constant emphasis on Germany's tragic past (notably the Thirty Years' War) and on the general history of the defeated and the victimized (as in "The Days of the Commune"). The official note in the G.D.R. was one of militant optimism, of coercive hope in the Stalinist dawn. Rightly, Party bureaucrats sensed in their most illustrious writer an incorrigible streak of irony, of anarchic clairvoyance. Matters came to a dramatic head during the June, 1953, uprising of the East Berlin workers. Privately, Brecht exulted in the genuine emergence of a politicized working class and felt bitterness at its brutal suppression. In an epigram that went around the world he urged the Party to remedy its situation by "electing a new people."

Nevertheless, and despite somewhat unctuous outrage in the West, Brecht stoutly refused to condemn the regime or to break with his homeland. Mistakes had been made and would be made in the future, but for Brecht history lay on the side of centralized state socialism. The spurious democracy of mass-consumption capitalism continued to be unacceptable to him. His position bore fruit. Brecht's own Berliner Ensemble harvested support and recognition. "The Caucasian Chalk Circle" was produced exactly as Brecht wished. Directors, actors, filmmakers from far and wide came on pilgrimage to the Brecht workshops. A Stalin Prize awarded by Moscow shielded Brecht from the jealous chicaneries of East German officiousness. A calm penetrates the late letters, even to Ruth Berlau. Brecht helped prepare a visit to London of the Ensemble and its overwhelming productions of the "Chalk Circle" and "Mother Courage." These took place, triumphantly, two weeks after Brecht's death, of a heart attack, on August 14, 1956.

DURING the night of last June 30th, columns of armored cars, under helicopter cover, churned into what little is left of the G.D.R. carrying millions of freshly printed Deutsche marks. Beyond the smashed Wall, crowds danced and waved Disneyland T-shirts. Nothing in this circus would have surprised Bert Brecht. Nor would the fact that the few who seek out his lapidary tomb in East Berlin are scholars or occasional theatre folk from the "rotten" West.

The best of the poems, the clutch of great plays (in modern drama, only Claudel is of comparable weight) will stay. And the cry of naked pain as it screamed, in perfect silence, out of the open, torn mouth of Helene Weigel in her performance of Mother Courage seems to be getting louder.

—GEORGE STEINER

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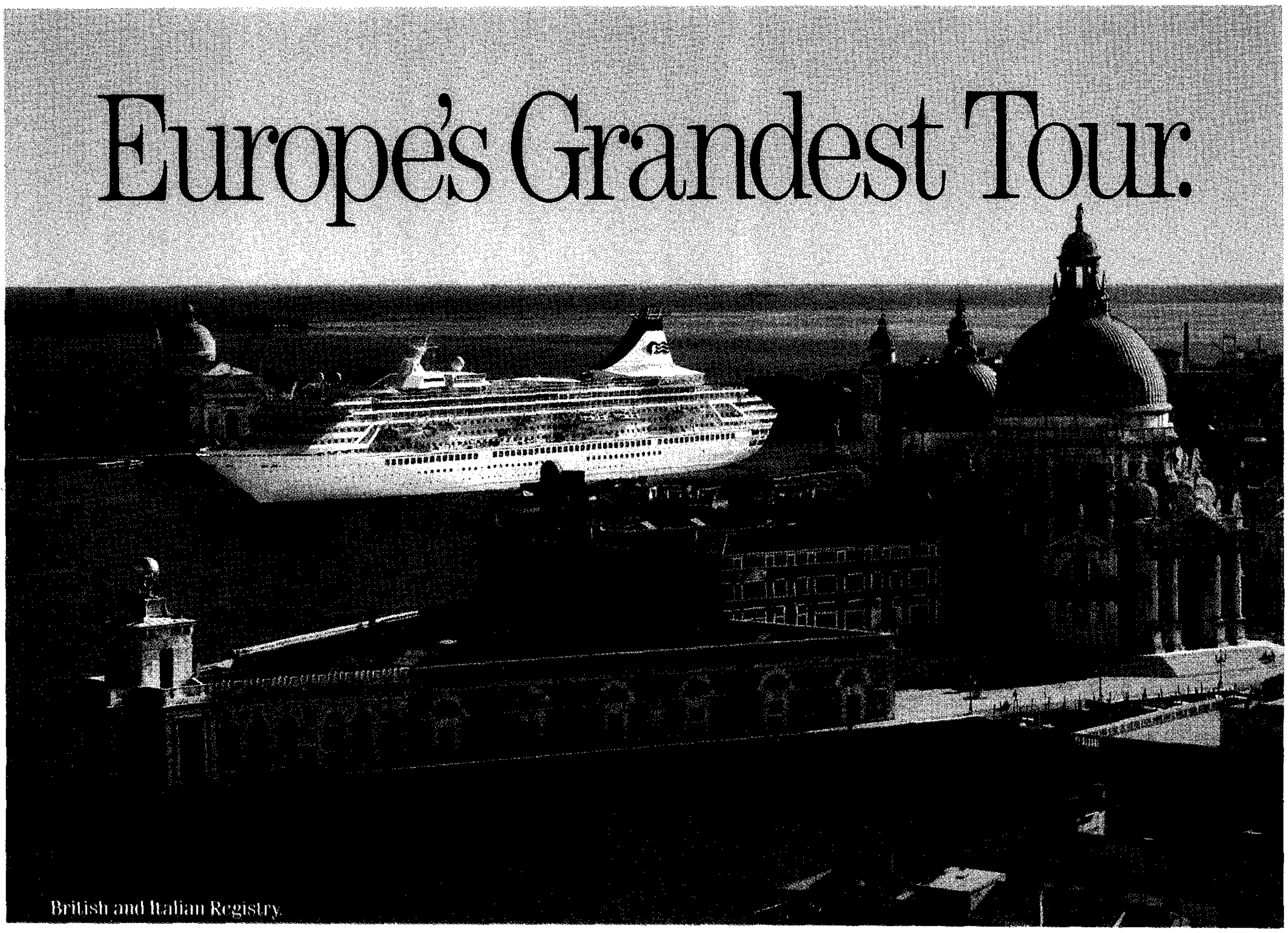

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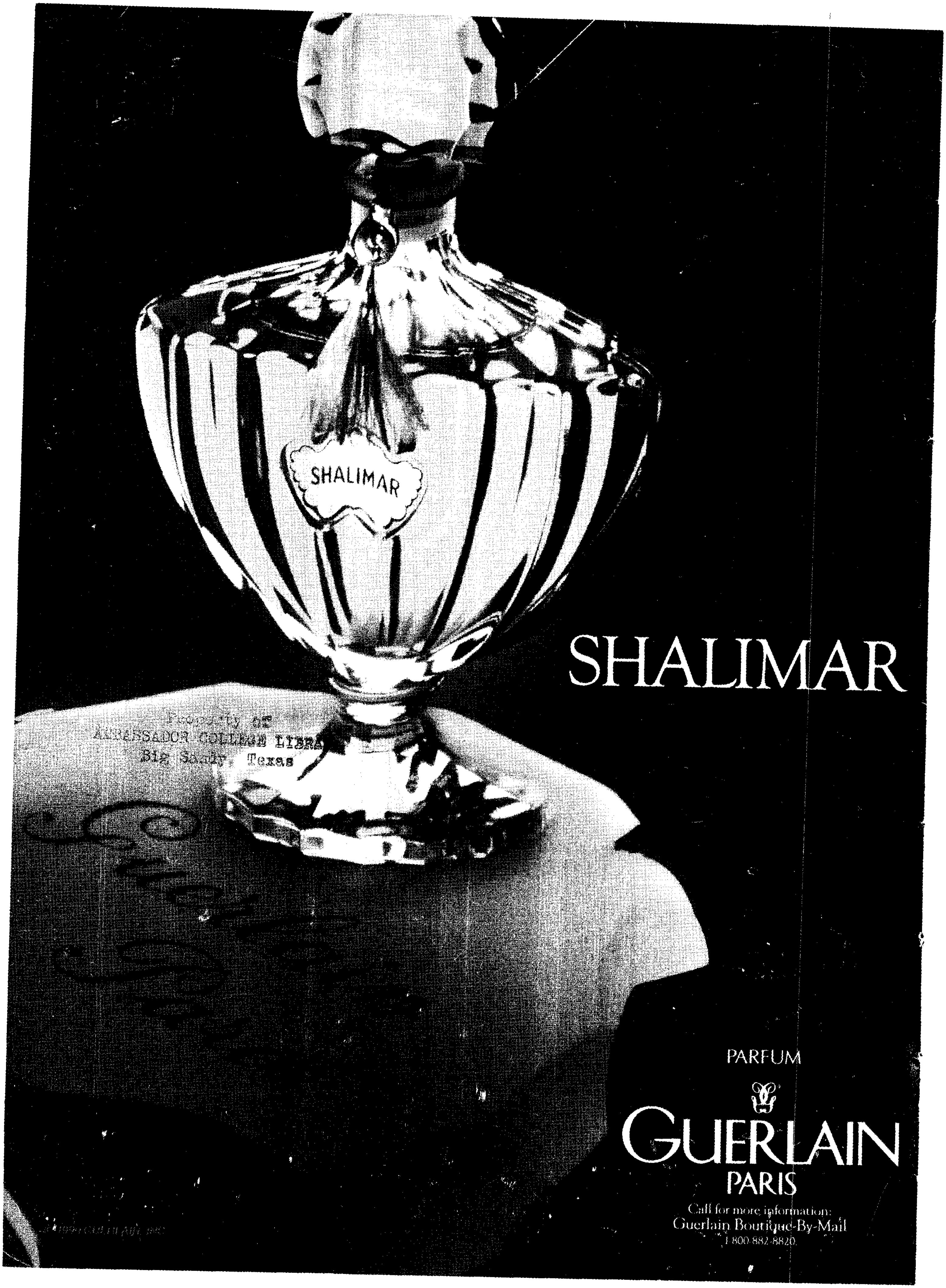

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